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DISCOURSE  
CONCERNING  
*The Inventions of Men*  
IN THE  
WORSHIP  
OF  
G O D.

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*The Seventh Edition.*

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I

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

The *Inventions* of MEN

IN THE

*Worship* of GOD.

The INTRODUCTION.

OUR Blessed Saviour has taught us, that there are some Ways of Worshipping God, which have so great a Mixture of *Human Invention* in them, that they are *Vain* and Un-  
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*acceptable to Him, Mark vii. 7. In vain (saith He) do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*

This obligeth every Man, who has a Concern for his Soul, to examine carefully the Worship he offers to God, whether it be such as God has Instituted; least his Service should be rejected with that Censure in the Prophet, *Who has required this at your Hands?* But more especially it concerns the Pastors of the Church, who have the Direction of the Publick Worship of God, to be careful in examining this Matter, that they may be able to satisfy their own Consciences, as well as the People's committed to their Charge, concerning the Purity of the Worship which they practise Themselves, and recommend to Others.

II. It has pleased God, in his Providence, to make Me an Overseer over some Part of his Flock in this Kingdom; and I look upon it to be my Duty, to use my Endeavours to  
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instruct those that are committed to my Charge, in the Worship of God, according to the Rules He has prescribed; and to warn such as I conceive to swerve from them, of their Mistakes. I hope it will be of Use and Satisfaction to those that joyn with me in the Publick Worship of God, to find, on Examination, that what they there practise, is agreeable to God's Institution. And as to those that think otherwise, I persuade my self, that an Admonition in the Spirit of Meekness can give them no just Offence, but rather be of Use to them also, by obliging them to examine and revise their Ways, that they may correct their Judgments, if from what I offer, they shall see Reason for it.

III. In Order to help those concerned to make a true and impartial Judgment in these Matters, I desire them to consider,

1st, *That it belongs only to God, to give Rules how he will be worshipped.*

This, I suppose, will be granted by all; since it seems to be a Truth naturally implanted in the Minds of Men, and universally acknowledg'd in all Times.

2dly, I take it for a Truth, agreed to by the Generality of *Protestants*, That the Holy Scriptures contain the Revelation of God's Will, concerning His Worship.

3dly, From these Two, we may reasonably infer, that it concerns us to keep as close as we can to those Directions which God has been pleased to afford us in his Word, without Adding to, Omitting, or Altering any thing that He has there laid down. For, since God has vouchsafed us a certain Direction [for his Worship in the Holy Scriptures, it is to be suppos'd, that all Ways of Worship are displeasing to Him, that are not expressly contained or warrant-ed by Examples of Holy Men mentioned therein.

4thly, We must observe, that the Worship of God is either Inward or  
Out-

Outward. The Inward Worship of God, consists in the Inward Homage and Subjection of our Minds to Him. The Outward, consists of such Acts and Duties as serve to express this Inward Subjection of our Souls; or that promote, encrease, contribute towards it. Thus, for Instance, Vocal Prayer is a Part of Outward Worship; because it expresses the Inward Dependance of our Souls on God. Thus, Reading the word of God, is a Part of the same; because therein we acknowledge our Subjection to Him, and to His Laws, and use it as a Means to promote, and encrease this Subjection. Thus, Celebration of the Sacraments, is a Part of the same Worship; because in them we not only express our Dependance on God for his Grace, but likewise oblige and bind our selves to serve Him. And the same holds in all Outward Acts of Worship.

5<sup>thly</sup>, We must remember, that 'tis in these Outward Acts that we are more immediately concerned as



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Publick Worshippers; for we cannot know the Inward Worship which Men pay to God in their Minds, but as it appears to us by these Outward Acts: And generally, when we speak of the Publick Worship of God, we mean this Outward; and concerning it, are the great Disputes and Differences among us; all of us being agreed as to the Inward, and what Sort that ought to be.

IV. Having premised these few Things, which, I hope, will be granted by All; I shall proceed directly to my proposed Undertaking; and shall, with the greatest Fairness and Impartiality I can, examine and compare the Worship of God, which is directed and warranted by Scripture, as well with that which is prescribed and practised by our Church, as with that which is practised by such as differ from us.

V. Now, if we consider the Ordinary Service of God, as prescribed and  
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practised in Scripture, we shall find the Main Substantial Parts of it to be these Five, (*viz.*)

*Praises,  
Prayers,  
Hearing,  
Bodily Worship : And,  
Celebration of the Holy Sacra-  
ment of the Body and Blood  
of Christ.*

The Method I shall take in Discourfing of each of these, fhall be,

*First,* To fhew what the Holy Scriptures direct concerning them particularly.

*Secondly,* I fhall confider the Practice of our Church, with Relation to thofe Directions and Examples : And,

*Thirdly,* The Practice of *Proteftant Diffenters.*

CHAP. I.  
Of PRAISES.

SECT. I.

*What the HOLY SCRIPTURES prescribe  
concerning them.*

I. **F**IRST then, as to the *Praises* of God; the Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New Testaments* require the Use of the *Psalms*, in Offering up Praises to God. We find in the *Old Testament*, 2 *Chron.* xxix. 30. *Hezekiah the King, and the Princes, commanded the Levites to sing Praises to the Lord with the Words of David, and Asaph; and they sang with Gladness.* This Command of *Hezekiah* proceeded from God, and was approv'd by Him. The same Way of Praising God continued in the *Jewish Church* 'till our Saviour's Time: And after that, we have yet a more Positive Command for the Use of them by the Apostle,

Sect. 1. *How warranted by Scripture.* 9

postle, Ephes. v. 19. *Speaking to your selves in Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual Songs.* And Col. iii. 16. *Let the Words of Christ dwell in you richly, in all Wisdom Teaching and Admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing, and making Melody, with Grace in your Hearts, to the Lord.* I think there is no Room to doubt, but by the *Psalms, &c.* in these Places, is meant the *Book of Psalms*, which the Holy Ghost has left for this Purpose to the Church.

II. Tho' the Scriptures recommend to us *Singing* of Psalms, yet in some Cases they allow us to *say* them. I will not insist on those Places of Scripture that seem to *require* us to do so, (such as *Psal. cxviii. 2. Let Israel now say, that his Mercy endureth for ever: Let the House of Aaron now say, and let them that fear the Lord now say, &c.*) because these Expressions being Poetical, may be so interpreted, as to mean *singing*; tho' there is no Necessity of restraining the general Command of *saying* or *speaking* the Praises of God to



*singing* only. We find in Scripture several sacred Hymns ; particularly of *Hannah*, the Blessed Virgin, *Zacharias*, and *Simeon*, and the Saints in Heaven, *Rev. vii. 12.* and *xi. 17.* which are said to have been *said* by them respectively; and the Circumstances in the Story do not make it probable that they were *sung*. From all which, we may reasonably infer, that where People can *sing*, they are obliged to do it, in Obedience to God's Command : But where through any Defect of Nature or Art, they cannot *sing* decently, they may be dispensed with *Saying*. Only People ought not, by this Indulgence, to be encouraged to neglect *Singing* altogether; or to think that God doth not require it of them, when, by a little Pains or Industry, they may attain to the Art of decently performing it in His Service.

III. 'Tis certain the Word of God recommends to us *Psalms* and *Hymns* in *Prose*, for our Praising God. If we look into the Songs of the Blessed Virgin, of *Zacharias*, or *Simeon*, we shall find

find them all in *Prose*; and such are the Songs of the *Blessed*, which they are represented singing, in the *Revelations*, particularly, *Chap. v. 9, and xv. 3.* As to the *Hebrew* Psalms, 'tis evident that they are Poetical; but the Poetry of them consists rather in the Style and Manner of Expression, than in any certain Measures or Verses; which those that have searched most narrowly into them, have yet been able to discover, so as to satisfy an indifferent Reader. But whatever Poetry there may be in them, we cannot find, by any of the Ancient Translations which were made Use of by the Church, in our Saviour's, or his Apostles Time, or in the Ages immediately following, that they, or the first Christians, did sing any Thing in *Verse*; but we are sure that they sung Hymns in *Prose*: So that we have no certain Scriptural Warrant for the Use of *Verse* or *Metre* in the Praises of God.

Perhaps some may fancy, that *Verse* or *Measure* was not in Use in those Countries, and that, therefore, they sung

sung their Songs in *Prose*: But this is a Mistake; *Poetry* and *Verses* were then in those Places where the *Psalms* were Translated, in great Request; and at the highest Perfection, when the *New Testament* was penn'd, and yet we have no Example therein of their Use in the Praises of God.

And 'tis very manifest, that this proceeded from *Choice*, not *Necessity*: For if the Holy Ghost had thought *Verse* necessary for Divine Psalms, we may presume He would have inspir'd some of the Holy Men in Scripture, when Extraordinary Gifts were so common, either to Translate the Psalms of the Old Testament into *Verse*, or else to compose some of the other Hymns that are recorded in the New, after that Way: But neither of these having been done, 'tis at least a Presumption, that we may praise God as acceptably in *Prose* as in *Verse*.

And there is one Thing further to be considered, that the Prophets of the *Heathen*, who pretended to be inspired, generally wrote their Prophecies, and  
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their Hymns to their Gods in *Verse*: We know not, but this may be one Reason, why the Holy Ghost thought fit, that such as were inspir'd by Him, should decline that way of Recording their Prophecies, or Praises.

IV. As the Scriptures prescribe us the Use of *Psalms* in the Praises of God, so they encourage us to offer those Praises by way of *Responses*, or *Answering*. For this, we have the best Examples that can be desir'd, even the blessed Angels and glorify'd Saints: So *Isa. vi. 3.* *And one cry'd out unto another, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts.* And the Church Triumphant thro' the whole *Revelation*, is (I think) constantly represented praising God after this Manner. So *Chap. vii. 9.* where *The Multitude*, that represent the People, *cry'd out with a loud Voice*, ver. 10. *Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb.* And then, *The Angels and Elders*, who represent the Clergy, perform their Part, ver. 12. saying, *Amen; Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour,*  
and



*and Power, and Might, be unto our God.*

They are represented the same way answering one another, *Chap. xix. 1. I heard a great Voice of much People in Heaven, saying, Allelujah*; this they repeat (*ver. 3.*) Then the *Twenty four Elders* (representing, as before, the Clergy) answer (*ver. 4.*) *Amen, Allelujah.* Then (*ver. 5.*) *A Voice came out of the Throne, saying, Praise our God.* Upon which (*ver. 6.*) the People resume their Part, and answer, *Allelujah*; for *the Lord Omnipotent reigns.* I make no Question but this is taken by Allusion, from the manner of the Churches praising God on Earth; and there is nothing in it but what is agreeable to *St. Paul's* Command, of *Teaching and Admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs*; which supposes every one to have Share in them, either by Turns, or by bearing a Part.

It is observable, that the *Psalms* contain many Excellent Instructions and Exhortations, as well as Praises and Prayers; and therefore *St. Paul* recommends them to Christians, for  
their

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their mutual Instruction and Admonition. It was common, therefore, for one to sing, and the rest to hearken to their Instruction and Edification, as appears, 1 Cor. xiv. 31. *For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and be comforted.* Prophecying here (as we may find from the 26th Verse of this Chapter) includes *Psalms*, as well as *Doctrines, Tongues, Revelations, and Interpretations*; and the praising God *one by one*, or by turns, amounts to praising Him by way of *Responses or Answering*; and tho' these Prophets were inspir'd, yet 'tis plain, they acted in this according to the settled Order of the Church, ver. 33. *As in all the Churches of the Saints*; and these inspir'd Prophets thus praising God *one by one*, is an unquestionable Precedent, that God approves this way in His Praises.

This way of praising God by *Answering one another*, is the most Ancient we find in Scripture. For thus *Miriam* praised God, Exod. xv. 21. *And Miriam answer'd them, sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously, &c.* And the  
last

last Song recorded in Scripture is of the same Sort, *Rev. xix.* as is before-mention'd.

I reckon the Songs with which the Women of *Israel* receiv'd *Saul*, *1 Sam. xviii. 7.* to be religious, and there it is expressly said, that *they answer'd one another*: And *Chap. xxi. 11.* *Did they not sing one to another?* &c. But whether these Songs were religious, or no, it is certain, that the Frame and Composition of some Psalms are such, as plainly discover that they were design'd to be sung in Parts, and as much is owned by the best Commentators; such are the *xxivth* and *cxviiiith Psalms*.

It is to observed, that the Law of *Moses* neither prescribes Psalms in the Praises of God, nor Singers, nor the Way of Singing: These all, therefore, are Parts of *Natural Religion*, and indeed, ancients than the *Law*; as appears by *Exod. xv.* What, therefore, we find in the Old Testament concerning these, is either from the immediate Prescriptions, and Revelations of God by his Prophets, or from the Dictates  
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of *Nature*, and not any part of the *Ceremonial Law*. And 'tis obvious, that natural Necessity will teach any considering Man this Way of Alternate Singing or Answering in Parts; for if the Songs be long, as some of the *Psalms* are, no one Man's Voice can hold out to the End.

V. The Holy Scriptures recommend to us the Use of Instruments in the Praises of God; the Psalmist frequently uses, and recommends them, and the whole Book of *Psalms* is concluded with this Advice, *Psal. cl. 3. Praise him with Timbrel, praise him with stringed Instruments and Organs, &c.* Thus religious Persons were taught to praise God, before the Law, *Exod. xv. 20. And Miriam the Prophetess, the Sister of Aaron, took a Timbrel in her Hand; and all the Women went out after her with Timbrels, &c.* And thus the Blessed in Heaven are represented praising God, *Rev. v. 8. & xiv. 2.* The Writers of the New Testament recommend to us the *Psalms* which were the Hymns of the *Jewish Church*; and command us to sing them  
and



and 'tis observable, that the Word we render *sing*, Jam. v. 13. originally implies *singing with an Instrument*. Now if they had not approved the *Jewish* way of singing them, which was with Instruments they would not have used a Word that imported it; Nay, it is not to be doubted, but they would have caution'd us against it; but the Use of Instruments (as I have shew'd before in the Case of *Miriam*) being no Part of the *Ceremonial Law*, but antecedent to it, ought not to cease, without some Command or Precept condemning it.

VI. *Lastly*, The Scripture requires that we understand the Praises we sing to God; and this warrants our Translating them into the *Vulgar Tongue*: It is a Duty therefore, incumbent on the Governours of the Church, to procure the Psalms to be Translated for the Use of the People under their Charge; and they may expect the *Assistance* of God's Spirit when they attempt it, in *Obedience* to His Command. But if, through human Frailty, any Mistake, not contrary to Faith, should creep in, this  
ought

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ought to be no Exception against the Use of the Translation, since there are such Mistakes both in the *Syriac, Greek* and *Latin* Translations, some of which are of great *Antiquity*, and were us'd by our *Saviour* himself, and his *Apostles*.

These are the Directions the Scriptures give us for the Performance of this first Part of the Worship of God, which consists in *Praises*, and the Manner we find them offer'd to Him by His Saints.

S E C T. II.

*The Manner of Praising God publicly, which is Prescrib'd and Practis'd by our Church.*

NOW as to the Manner of Offering Praises in our Church, it is to be considered,

1. That we are directed to praise, glorify, and confess to God every Day, in a certain Number of *Psalms* or his own Appointment, out of the *Old Testament*; and then in such *Hymns* as are recorded in the *New*. And to these

these are added such other *Hymns*, *Confessions* of *Faith*, and *Thanksgivings*, as will appear by and by, to be agreeable to the general Directions of Scripture.

But inasmuch as the Mystery of the *Holy Trinity*, is more *explicitly* reveal'd to us under the *Gospel*, than it was to those under the *Law*; therefore, our Church has thought fit to require us with every *Psalms* and *Hymn* to intermix, *Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost*; *As it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever shall be*: To signify, that we believe, that the same *God* was worshipp'd by them as by us; the same *God* that is *glorified* in the *Psalms*, having been from the Beginning, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, as well as now: So that our ascribing this Glory expressly to the Three Persons in whose Name we are Baptiz'd, ought not to be taxed as any real Addition to the *Psalms*, it being only us'd as a necessary Expedient to turn the *Jewish Psalms* into *Christian Hymns*, and to fit them for the Use of the Church  
now,

Sect. 2. How practis'd by our Church. 167

now, as they were before for the Use of the Synagogue; which Practice, I presume, can give Cause of Exception to none but *Socinians*.

2. Our Church orders these *Psalms* to be either *sung* or *said*, as the People are able to offer them; not being willing to lay a greater Restraint on them than the Scripture has done: In which (as I have already shewn) we have Examples for both these Ways of Praising God.

3. They are propos'd to us in *Prose*, without any other Alteration from the Original, than what was necessary to make them intelligible in our Language.

4. The People are allow'd to bear their Part in them, and either to sing or say them, by way of Answering: This is according to the Scripture Examples; but 'tis not impos'd, except in very few Cases.

5. Our Church permits the Use of some grave *Musical* Instruments, to regulate the Voices of those that sing, and to stir up their Affections, which  
are



are the natural Effects of *Musick*, and seem more requisite in *Northern* Countries, where generally People's Voices are more harsh and untuneable than in other Places; but this is not impos'd in any Congregation, nor does any Rule of our Church require it, and therefore, it is at the People's Choice, whether they will use the Help of these Instruments or no.

6. This then is the Care our Church has taken, for the Publick Performance of the Praises of God: And if we bring Grace in our Hearts, and an inward Sense of the Majesty of God, and of His Mercies towards us, when we come to joyn in them, which is our Part and Duty to do; who can say that God's Praises thus celebrated, are not according to his Commands, and acceptable to Him? I think it sufficiently plain, that they are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, which ought to be our Rule for this, and all other Parts of God's Worship.

I think no more necessary, therefore, on this Head, but with all Earnestness

Sect. 3. How practis'd by our Church. 23

to beseech you who are of our Communion, to consider how great and important a Part these Praises are of the Worship of God, and to apply our selves with all Diligence and Holy Zeal to the Performance of it; for we never come nearer the Employment of the Blessed, than when our Hearts and Mouths are filled with the Praises of our God.

S E C T. III.

*The Dissenters Manner of Praising God  
in Publick.*

**A**ND now as to you my Friends and Brethren, who dissent from this Worship of ours; give me Leave with all Calmness, to examine how you perform this great Work of Praising God: And I desire you to compare your own Practice in your Publick Assemblies, with what you find in your Bibles concerning this Duty.

I. Your *Directory* determines it to be *the Duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by singing of Psalms together*  
in

*in the Congregation; and that in singing Psalms, the Voice is to be tuneable and gravely order'd; and lastly, that it is convenient, that the Minister, or some other fit Person appointed by him, and the other Ruling Officers, do read the Psalm, Line by Line, before the singing thereof; and your common Practice is to sing two or three Verses of a Psalm in Metre, the Minister, or Clerk, first reading each Line, and the People singing it after.*

II. Before I proceed to make any Observations on these Rules and Practice; to prevent Mistakes, I desire you to observe,

1. That I do not condemn the singing of Psalms in *Metre*, as unlawful.

2. That I take it for granted, that the Apostles and Primitive Christians did praise God in *Prose*; and that *Metre* and *Rhime* are, for ought appears, purely of human Invention.

3. We must consider, that if we take the Psalms (as we use them) in *Prose*, there is not a more exalted Piece of Poetry in the World, nor any Thing

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thing better fitted to raise in serious and well-disposed People, the most devout Affections. Whereas, if we take them as they are commonly us'd in *Rhime*, the Force, the Vigour, the Loftiness, which are so Extraordinary in the *Prose* Translation, are almost entirely lost in the *Verse*; and tho' several have attempted to Translate them into *English Verse*, yet I cannot find, that any one has done Justice to the Majesty of the Expressions, and hardly to the Sence of them.

III. Having premis'd these things, I entreat you to consider impartially with me, how far this your Practice agrees with the Scripture Rule.

1<sup>st</sup>. then, The Scriptures command us to praise God in *Psalms*; and, undoubtedly, the first Christians us'd whole *Psalms* at a time. Sometimes they joyn'd together in singing them, as our *Saviour* and his *Disciples* did. *Mat. xxvi. 30.* Sometimes one only sung, and the rest attended, for their Edification, as appears from *1 Cor. xiv. 26.* But the aforesaid Me-



thod of singing the *Metre Psalms* takes up so much time, that 'tis impossible to praise God in whole Psalms after that Manner. But if we use the Psalms in *Prose*, according to the Order of our Church, the Experience of good Men doth testify, that we may easily pass through them in a Month, with Seriousness and Attention, whether we sing or read them. And to well-disposed Minds no Part of God's Service is more agreeable, or edifying: Whereas some Years would not serve to that purpose, if we should use the new-invented way of singing a few Verses. And I question whether all of them were ever yet sung through in one Meeting-place, perhaps not in all the Meetings of the Kingdom; and yet it must be confess'd, that every one of them was left to the Church by the Holy Ghost for that Use; and is *profitable* when thus us'd, for *Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Instruction and Comfort*. Which plainly proves, that the singing the Psalms in *Metre*, is not the Scripture Way of using them.

2. Let

2. Let me mind you, that in the Time of the LATE USURPATION, Dr. Manton, a Man of considerable Reputation among the *Dissenters*, observes in his Comment on the Epistle of St. *James*, chap. v. ver. 13. That several scrupled singing of *Psalms* at all; others objected against singing them in *Verse*; this he calls a *vain Cavil*, yet proposes, *If the Scruple continues, that such may sing the Reading Psalms, as hath been us'd in Cathedrals*, and vouches St. *Austin* and *Athanasius* for it; which is a plain Confession from this considerable Person, that this Way of Singing is less liable to Exception, than yours.

3. I know 'tis alledg'd, that we ought to have the *Psalms* in *Verse*, for Singing, as well as we ought to have them in *Prose*, for Reading. But I have shew'd already, that *Christ*, and his *Disciples*, sung their Hymns in *Prose*; and I desire you to consider, whether it be necessary to vary from these Precedents. We have a Command to *Translate* them

(which supposes into *Prose*, because the *Original* is so) but none to turn them into *Metre*, which necessarily requires Paraphrasing, changing the Order of the Sentences, sometimes adding, and, sometimes leaving out Words; and on that Account seems to give Human Wit too great a Liberty of treating the Word of God as Men please: At least, we must acknowledge, that the *Psalms* so order'd, partake of Human Frailty, and are hardly equal to the best meer Human Composures. When, therefore, we use such *Psalms*, we ought to use them as Human Composures only, and not as God's Word: And thus they are used by our People in our Assemblies, not as any main substantial Part of the Worship of God, but rather as a voluntary Entertainment of Devotion, and a Refreshment to the People between the Parts of the *Service*; much less are they allow'd by us, to jostle out the *Psalms* and Hymns appointed by God.

4. As to the *Manner* of Singing the *Psalms*

Psalms in *Metre*, at present in Use, both with you and us in some Places, that is, the Minister, or Clerk's *reading* a Line, and the People *singing* it after, is a great Interruption to the *Musick*, and to the Understanding of the Psalm, by breaking the Sence of it, and in that respect very inconvenient, and is likewise a late Invention of our own, never us'd by any Foreign Church, either *Popish* or *Reformed*, for ought I can find, to this Day; and has been taken up to supply the Negligence and Laziness of People, who will not now, as formerly, be at Pains to get Psalms by Heart, or so much as procure Books, or learn to read them.

5. Notwithstanding your *Directory* requires the Voice, in singing Psalms, *to be tuneable, and gravely order'd*; yet you have not only refus'd the Use of Instruments, (which are a Natural Means to help the Voice, and make it tuneable, and are us'd by most of the Reformed Churches in *Europe*) but have also determin'd it to be Unlawful.



I would entreat you to consider, that tho' perhaps, it may not be so proper to press the Use of Instruments in the Service of *God*, in these Parts, where so many, for want of being us'd to them, have entertain'd Prejudices against them, and some are incapable of being affected by them; yet the making them Unlawful, is against *Nature* and *Scripture*, and is on that Account a dangerous Superstition, and Encroachment on Christian Liberty.

6. The same Superstition and Encroachment it is, not only to forbear to Praise *God*, in singing, or saying Psalms and Hymns by way of *Responses*, or *Answering*, (of which I have given such Noble Precedents out of Scripture) but even to determine it to be Unlawful.

*Lastly*, I would entreat you to consider, That forasmuch as appears, you have altogether laid aside the Psalms in *Prose*, and the other Scripture Hymns, that are of *God's immediate Appointment*, and for the Use of which  
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Sect. 3. *How practis'd by Dissenters.* 31

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we have the Example of our *Saviour* and his *Saints*, insomuch that they are no where us'd by you in the *Praises* of God; but in their stead you have substituted, as is before observ'd, a *few Verses* of a Psalm of *Human Composition*, without Scripture Example, or Precedent, and sing them a Way that has nothing of ancient Practice, much less Scripture for it, but is purely and immediately, an *Invention of Men*.

IV. The Case, then, between our Church and you, in this Point, I think impartially stands thus: Our Church praises God every Day with five or six *Psalms*, besides other *Hymns*, of *His Own Appointment*, and in *His Own Words* and *Method*, and yet is deserted and condemned by you in this very Point; as *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; whereas you, who only praise Him in a Piece of a Psalm of a few Verses, and in a *Method of your own finding out*, persuade your selves that you keep the Ordinances of God pure and unmix'd from *Human Invention*.

This is a thing seriously to be consider'd by you; for as it is easy to think what all unprejudic'd Men will judge of it now, so we may conclude what God will judge of it at the last Day. If you, in earnest, lay these things to Heart, and reflect on them, I persuade my self, that they will at least prevail with you to be modest in your Censures of us your Brethren; and prevent your Judging, much less Condemning us, or our Manner of *Praising* God, as Unacceptable to Him.

## CHAP. II.

## Of PRAYER.

## SECT. I.

*What the HOLY SCRIPTURES prescribe concerning it.*

I. **L**ET us now proceed to the *Second* Main Part of the *Worship of God*, in the Publick Meetings of  
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*Sect. 1. How warranted by Scripture. 33*

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of Christians; which I observ'd, was *Prayer, or Supplication.*

And if we consider what Rules, Directions and Examples the Scriptures afford us, for the Performance of this Duty, we shall find,

*That they direct us to offer up our Prayers in a Set and Prepared Form of Words.* That we may more clearly judge of this Matter, it will be fit to consider the several Parts of *Prayer* distinctly by themselves; such as *Confession, Supplication, Intercession, &c.*

1. *Confession* of our own *Unworthiness*, and of *God's Mercy*, to aggravate it, is commonly look'd on as the first Part of *Prayer*, and proper to introduce our *Supplications*. Now, in searching the Scriptures, we shall find express Command to use a Set Form of Words in both these Sorts of *Confession*. So *Deut. xxvi. 3. Thou shalt go unto the Priest that shall be in those Days, and say unto him, I profess this Day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the Country which the Lord swear unto our Forefathers to give us.*



And then the Offerer was to make his Confession, *ver. 5. And thou shalt speak, and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my Father, &c.* Here we have a *Form of Confession* of the Person's *Unworthiness*, and of God's *Goodness* and *Mercy*, together with a *Profession of Obedience*, and Dependence on Him, prescribed by God Himself in Set and Prepared Words.

The same appears from *Solomon's* prescribing a *Form of Confession* for the penitent *Israelites*, *1 Kings viii. 47.* Which Words we find accordingly apply'd in *Psal. cvi. 6.* and made Part of a larger *Form of Confession*, to be us'd in their Captivity (as *Solomon* design'd them;) which appears from *Ver. 47.* of the same *Psalms* (taken from the *Form* prescrib'd by *David*, *1 Chron. xvi. 35.*) And *Daniel*, in his *Form of Confession* in Captivity, *chap. ix. 5.* uses the same *Form of Words*. From whence it appears, that they were not left arbitrarily to Choice, or Discretion, tho' other Words might be joyn'd with them, when there was  
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Occasion to enlarge, or vary the *Form*.

Many of the *Psalms* are Forms of *Confession*, and were us'd, and daily repeated by the *Jewish Church*. *Psal. li.* was the Form of Confession *David* prepar'd and us'd, for his *Murder* and *Adultery*: And he not only us'd it himself, but directed it to the Master of his *Choir*, to be us'd in the Publick Service, as appears from the *Title* of it. *Psal. lxxviii.* is a general *Confession* for the whole People, setting forth at large the *Mercies* of God to them; and their *Ingratitude*, *Disobedience*, and *Rebellion*: And this not as a Pattern, but as a *Set* and *Prepar'd* Form, to be us'd in their publick Service. All which shew us, that *Addresses* to God in such Forms, are of *Divine Institution*; and are a *Warrant* to us, that He approves, that our *Confession* should be made to Him in that Manner.

2. The Second Part of *Prayer*, is *Supplication* for good Things: And in this Case we have likewise the Commandment of God for a *Form* of Words,  
*Deut.*

*Deut. xxvi. 13, 15. Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, Look down from thy holy Habitation, from Heaven, and bless thy People Israel, and the Land which thou hast given us, and thou swear-est unto our Fathers, &c. So Hos. xii. 2. Take with you Words, and turn to the Lord your God, and say unto him, Take away all Iniquity, &c. Moses in the Wilderness us'd a Set Form of Words to this Purpose, and recommended it to be us'd by the Church of God for ever; as is manifest from Psalm xc. which has this Title, A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God. When such a Person by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, us'd, and left to be us'd by us in our Supplications, such a Set and Prepared Form of Words, we ought not to doubt, but that Manner of Address is acceptable to God.*

3. The Third Part of Prayer, is *Intercession* in the behalf of others. Now, Blessing is an eminent Sort of Intercession; and for the Use of a Set Form of Words in this, we have likewise the Command of God, *Numb. vi. 23.*

SECT. I. How warranted by Scripture. 37

vi. 23. *On this wise ye shall bless the Children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, &c.* Here we have not only a Blessing, but an earnest *Intercession* with God for his People, and the *Form* and *Words* prescrib'd by Himself, which were not to be us'd by mean, ignorant People, (who are only now suppos'd by some, to need the help of *Forms*,) but by *Aaron*, and his *Sons* the Chief Priests. From which we may be assur'd, That God approves that Manner of Address in our *Blessings* and *Intercessions* for one another, not only from mean People, but from the greatest.

4. The Fourth Part of Prayer consisteth in *Petitions* for averting Evil, commonly call'd *Deprecation*. And for this Purpose, we have several Forms prescrib'd by God, *Joel i. 14. Gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land, into the House of the Lord your God, and say unto the Lord, Alas for the Day; the Day of the Lord is at hand, &c.* We have God's Commandment for another Form, *Joel ii.*



17. *Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar, and let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to Reproach, &c.* From whence it clearly follows, that God approves of the Use of a Form in this Part of Prayers, tho' commonly the most earnest and importunate, and such as seems least to admit of being bounded by a Form ; so that we have the Approbation and Commandment of God for the Use of a Set Form of Words, in all the Parts of Prayer.

II. And accordingly we find holy Men of God, tho' full of Wisdom, and of his Spirit, using the same Set Form of Prayer always on the same Occasion. Thus the Scriptures inform us concerning Moses, *Numb. x. 35. When the Ark set forward, Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine Enemies be scatter'd; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto he many thousands of Israel.* From whence it appears, that God approves the

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the Use of one Set, Constant *Form* of Words in our Prayers, as long as the Occasion of repeating them is the same : For, I presume, none will suspect it was for want of Words, or of the *Spirit of Prayer* that *Moses* confin'd himself to this *Form*.

I shall add further, That the whole Book of *Psalms* is a Collection of Prayers of all Sorts ; and there are few of them but what are most Excellent *Forms* of Prayer, express'd in such pathetick, significant, and moving Words, that we have great Reason to thank God for furnishing us with them, and which we can never hope to equal by any of our own *Invention*, such are *Psalms* iv, v, vi, vii, ix, x, xii, &c. On this Account they were us'd by the *Jews*, as the constant *Service* and *Liturgy* perform'd in their Temple, as we may gather from what I formerly quoted, 2 *Chron.* xxix. 30.

III. But, perhaps, some may think, these Commands and Examples of Set *Forms* of Prayer not to be sufficient Warrant to Christians ; because they

they are taken out of the *Old Testament*, before the Spirit was pour'd out in so plentiful a Measure as under the Gospel. I shall, therefore, proceed to examine the Commands and Examples of the *New Testament*. And here,

1. I think 'tis certain, that our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles*, pray'd by a *Form*; for they joyn'd in the Worship of the *Temple* and *Synagogues*, which consisted in *Psalms*, as I have already shewn, and in some certain Forms of *Prayers* added to them, and constantly us'd in their *daily Service*, as we learn from those that give an Account of

\* Much to this purpose might be urg'd out of the Rabbins; but the Author thinks it fit to confine himself to Scripture.

the *Jewish* Worship at that \* time. Now our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* being frequently present at their Service, both in the *Temple* and *Synagogues*, 'tis manifest, they approv'd the Manner of Addressing themselves to God in a Set *Form of Words*.

2. But our *Saviour* has put this Matter out of all Dispute with Impartial

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partial Men, by Prescribing a *Form* to his Disciples, when they desir'd him *to teach them to pray, as John taught his Disciples.* For we find his Way of Teaching them, was not by directing them to wait for the Impulses of the Spirit, and immediate *Inspiration* from God, of what they were to offer up to him : We do not find him saying, *When ye Pray ; speak what shall then come into your Minds, or what shall be given you in that Hour,* without taking *thought about what they should say ;* as he did in another Case, that is, when they should be *brought before Governors and Kings, for his sake ;* Mat. x. 19. But in Addressing themselves to God, he prescrib'd them a *Form of Words,* and commanded them to use it, Luke xi. 2. *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.* Here is an express Command of Christ to his Disciples, to use these *Words* when they pray, *Our Father, &c.* A Command for the Use of a *Form,* so plain, that 'tis impossible to express it in clearer Terms. 'Tis



'Tis not to be doubted, but Religious Persons among the *Jews* offer'd up constantly Prayers to God. We see it in *David*, *Psal.* lv. 17. and in *Daniel*, *chap.* vi. 10. And no doubt, the *Disciples* of our *Saviour* were not wanting in this *Duty*, nor in *Skill* to perform it; since we find, that other devout Persons of their Time had their Hours of Prayer, as we see in *Acts* iii. 1. Therefore, what they desir'd of our *Saviour*, was not to teach them *absolutely*, or in general, to pray, but to teach them to pray, as *John* also taught his *Disciples*; that is, to give them a *Form* of Prayer proper to his *Institution*, as they saw the *Disciples* of *Moses* and *John* had proper to theirs. Upon which our *Saviour* gave them the *Lord's Prayer*, as a Summary of the main Points of his *Doctrine*, and as a constant Badge of their being his *Disciples*. As if he should have said, *Whenever you offer up to God your usual Prayers, which Religious Custom has taught you, as Jews and Disciples of Moses, or of John, whether in Secret or Publick; add this*  
*always*

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*always to your other Prayers, for a continual Remembrance to you, of those Duties, Priviledges, and Qualifications which belong to you, as My Disciples; and as a Means of obtaining Grace from your Heavenly Father, to enable you to persevere in them. The Lord's Prayer is, therefore, a Badge of our Profession, imposed by Christ himself, and to be us'd by Us, as we would be accounted his Disciples.*

Neither will saying the Substance of it in *other Words* of our *own Invention*, answer the Intent of this Command: Since,

1. We are sure the Substance of the Prayer is put by Christ in the most apposite, and comprehensive *Words* that are possible; and, therefore, wholly to lay them aside for others is plainly to decline the Choice of Words that Christ has made for us, and substitute less apposite of our own, to expresse those Petitions in.

2. The more particularly any thing is Commanded in the Worship of God, we ought to be the more careful

ful to observe it ; and may be the more confident, that God is pleas'd with our Performance of it. Since, therefore, we are particularly commanded, when we pray, to say, *Our Father*, &c. whatever other Prayers we offer to God, this ought not to be omitted.

3. In general, we are commanded to offer up our Desires to God ; and in particular, to offer this Prayer. These Commands agree very well together, and, therefore, the one ought not to juggle out the other. To lay aside the Prayer particularly commanded by Christ, for others of our own Composing, in pursuance of the general Command, is too apparently to prefer our own *Invention* to God's *Command*.

4. When we take the Liberty to word our own Prayers, we may forget some things ; we may mix our own Frailties and Weakness in our Petitions ; and this too often appears both in the Matter and Wording of them. The Way, therefore, to supply

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ply these Defects, and to obtain Pardon for our Infirmities, is, to use our Lord's perfect Prayer, not only as a *Pattern* for Prayer (*as some will have it*) but likewise as a *Form* necessary to be us'd, to correct what may be amiss, or defective in our own *Prayers*.

5. They who lay aside the Words of the *Lord's Prayer*, are in danger to lay aside some of the Substance of it also; particularly the Substance of that Petition, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*: For many who lay aside the *Lord's Prayer*, do neither in Terms nor Substance offer this Petition to God; nay, are so far from making this the *Condition* of their Pardon, as Christ has taught us, that they publicly dispute against the *Form*, for this very Reason: Tho' Christ, who foresaw the *Objection* which our *Corruptions* would be apt to make, has answer'd it, and bound it upon us indispensably as our Duty, to ask *Forgiveness* on these, and no other Terms, *Mat. vi. 15*. And, indeed, if such a  
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Sentence had been prescrib'd by our *Lord*, to be only repeated by Christians once, or oftner, every Day, it would have seem'd but what was necessary, to mind them of that peculiar, and indispenfable Duty of their *Profession*. We see the Wisdom of the Ancients thought fit to reduce their *Doctrine* or *Instructions* into *Proverbs*, or *short Sentences* to be got by Heart, and kept continually in Memory, as of great Influence for guiding Mens Lives and Actions; and *such Sentences* must be of much greater Influence, when repeated in the Presence of *God*, as these in our *Lord's Prayer* are requir'd to be.

*Lastly*, This Prayer being given us as a Badge of our *Profession*, a Summary of our Duty as *Christians*, and a *Form of sound Words*; 'tis no more lawful to alter it, than to lay it aside; and it would be the same Presumption and Hazard to substitute other Words instead of Christ's, in this *Prayer*, which we are oblig'd always to use when we Pray, as to change  
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the Words of our *Creed* ; or as it would be in a Battle, to change the *Word* given by a General, or any Part of it, and to retain only the Signification of it. From all which, 'tis manifest, that God has requir'd *Forms of Prayer* to be us'd by us, both in the Old and New Testament.

As to the Difference we find in the *Lord's Prayer*, as deliver'd by St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, 'tis to be observ'd, that our *Saviour* spake in the *Syriac*, or vulgar *Hebrew*, and the *Evangelists* writ their Gospels in *Greek* : Now in the *Syriac*, one and the same Word expresses both those different Words, which the *Evangelists* use in the same Petition, as *Debts*, and *Trespases*, &c. So that tis no *real*, but a *seeming* Difference between them ; all the different Words being the same in the *Original Language* in which our *Saviour* spake.

IV. As we have the *Command* of God, and the *Example* of his *Saints*, for Offering up our Prayers to Him, in a Set and Prepared *Form of Words* ;  
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so we have the like Example for *joining Voices*, upon Occasion, in Offering these *Words*. Generally 'tis sufficient, that the *People* joyn in their Hearts with the Words of Publick Prayers; yet the Scriptures warrant also, *on some Occasion*, their joining their *Voices*.

1. Thus we find the People of *Israel* addressing themselves to God, *Judg. xxi. 2. And the People came to the House of God, and abode there 'till Even, before God; and lift up their Voices, and wept sore, and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel? &c.*

2. In *Hymns* and *Psalms* (which are also *Prayers* in great part, as I noted before) the People are generally allow'd by all (as being fully warranted by Scripture) to join their Voices. So *Moses*, and the Children of *Israel* sung unto the Lord, *Exod. xv. 1.*

3. In the New Testament we have an Eminent Example of this Practice, *Acts iv. 24.* where the Apostles and their Disciples *lift up their Voice to God*

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*God with one Accord, and said, Lord thou art God, &c.* If this Prayer was immediately inspir'd, as it seems it was; then the whole Assembly was inspir'd together, not only to think the same Thing, but likewise to utter the same Words; and the Spirit of God by it has attested the Fitness and Decency of a whole Congregation's pronouncing the same Prayer together. If it had not been convenient, that this should be sometimes practis'd in our Christian Assemblies, God would not have given us this Example. If the People were always to joyn in their Hearts only with our Publick Prayers, it would have been so here; for the Spirit of God would not have led them to do an indecent thing, or a thing unfit for *God's Worship*.

4. *St. Paul and Silas join'd also their Voices in their Prayers, as we may see from Acts xvi. 25. And at Midnight Paul and Silas pray'd, and sung Praises unto God, and the Prisoners heard them.* I know it may be alledg'd, That they sung their Prayers,

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ers, which they offer'd up to God on this *Occasion*, and on that Account *join'd their Voices*. I confess the Original favours this Inference ; but if it be allow'd, that the Apostles *sung* their Prayers together, it must be allow'd, that they might likewise *say* them together : For we find the Blessed in Heaven offering not only their *Praises* together, but their *Prayers* also ; so Rev. vi. 10. *They cried with a loud Voice, saying, How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost thou not judge, and avenge our Blood, &c.* From all which 'tis manifest, that we are warranted by the Examples of *God's People*, both in the Old and New Testament, to join our *Voices*, as well as our *Hearts*, in some of our publick Supplications to God ; and that this Practice is no *New Invention of Men*.

V. If we consult the Scripture, we shall find, that 'tis the Priest's Part to make Publick Intercession for the People, but yet so, that the People ought to bear a Part by themselves, and answer in the Service, which we commonly call *Responses*. 1. They

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1. They are commanded to do it, *Pfal. cvi. 48.* where after the Prayers and Praises, of which the *Psalms* consists, are ended, it is added, *Let all the People say, Amen; Praise the Lord:* And accordingly we find, *1 Chron. xvi. 36.* that *the People said Amen, and praised the Lord.* And this is more significantly observable in that solemn Service at the Dedication of *Solomon's Temple*, where we find, first, the *Priests and Levites* praising God, *2 Chron. v. 13.* and saying, *for he is good; for his Mercy endureth for ever:* The usual Form of Praising, so often repeated in the *Psalms*, particularly in the *cxxxvith*, which was probably us'd at that time. Then *Solomon*, who built the Temple, perform'd another Part of the Service, *Chap vi. 3.* he blessed, *first*, the People; *secondly*, he blessed and thanked God for his Mercy; and *lastly*, offered that Divine Prayer of *Dedication*, which we find in that Chapter: Then follow the *Burnt-Offerings* and *Sacrifices*, which were peculiarly the *Priest's* Share of

the Service, *Chap. 7.* And God gives his Approbation of their Praises, Prayers, and Offerings, by sending down Fire from Heaven to consume their Sacrifices : And then, last of all, follows the People's Part which they perform, *Chap. vii. 2. They bowed themselves with their Faces to the Ground upon the Pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, He is good ; for his Mercy endureth for ever.* This Service was order'd by the Spirit of God, and plainly shews us, that He approv'd of the People's having a Share, or Part, peculiar to themselves in his Worship.

2. If it be said, that this was the Way of Worshipping God under the Law, which is now abolished, and Unlawful, as well as the other *Levitical* Ceremonies : The *Apostles* have answer'd this, by continuing this Practice in the Christian Church, and by admitting the People to bear a Part in the Publick Service, and to answer to the Prayers, have assur'd us, that this is no Legal Abolish'd

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lish'd Ceremony. This is manifest from 1 Cor. xiv. 16. *Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the Room of the Unlearned, say, Amen, at thy giving of Thanks?* Which shews, that even the Unlearned had a Part assigned them in the Christian Assemblies. It may be added to this, what I observ'd before, *Chap. 1. Sect. 1. N. 4.)* of the *Responses* in Praising God, and of the Worship describ'd in the *Revelations*, where the *Angels* and *Elders* representing the Clergy, and the *Multitude* representing the People, bear each of them their distinct Parts; in Allusion to what was done in the Christian Assemblies. And this is a clear Proof, that the People bore a Part, and answer'd to the Blessings and Prayers of him that officiated, ever since the Christian Worship was Established.



## S E C T. II.

*The Rules and Practice of our Church,  
concerning Prayer.*

**H**AVING thus seen the Directions and Examples, which the Scriptures afford us for the Publick Performance of our Prayers to God ; let us now consider the Worship of Our Church, and compare it with them, both as to the Words and Matter of our Prayers : And to the Comfort of us who are of this Communion, it will clearly appear,

1. That there is not one thing we ask of God in them, which He has not particularly directed us to ask ; or any thing for which we ought to pray, that it is omitted. The Advantage we have towards the Proof of this Point, that our Prayers are fixed and stated, and may be examin'd by all, that have a Mind to be satisfy'd in them. An Advantage we gain by putting them into a Set and Prepared

*Form*

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*Form of Woras*, according to the Com-  
mands of God, and the Examples of  
Holy Men; whereas 'tis impossible  
for such as use only *ex tempore* Prayer,  
thus to justify their Service, because  
their Prayers are altogether uncertain,  
and depend on the present Thoughts  
of the Speaker.

2. Our Church requires the People  
to join their Voices with the Minister  
in some of the Prayers, in which they  
are more particularly concern'd, and  
which seem of the most general, and  
greatest Moment: Such are the gene-  
ral Confessions of Sin, and the *Lord's*  
*Prayer*.

3. Our Church has assign'd for the  
People, some short *Answers* or *Respon-*  
*ses* to our Prayers, whereby they may  
be stirred up to Attention, and signify  
their Concurrence with the Minister.  
Thus to every Prayer and Blessing  
they are obliged to answer *Amen*,  
as, we find, the People did in the  
Church of *Corinth*; and to join Una-  
nimously in some other short Ejacu-  
lations, to implore God's Mercy, or  
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befeech Him to hear us. In all which, I have already shew'd, we have the Warrant of Scripture; and 'tis plain to any one, that will be at the Pains to consider our Service, that we have taken the Rules thereof from Scripture, and have not invented a Service out of our own Heads; and then (as is too often the Custom of *Innovators*) endeavour'd to make the Scripture comply with it. The first *Reformers* of Our Church would never have retain'd, and prepar'd *Forms* of Prayers, had they not found such in Scripture: They would never have requir'd the People to join their Voices in some Prayers, and answer to others, if the Examples of Scripture had not led them to it. They profess'd, that their Design was to make the Word of *God* their Rule; and we see how exactly they conform'd to it in these Particulars. I wish I could say as much for all other Ways of Worship among Protestants.

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S E C T. III.

*The Practice of those who differ from us.*

I. **A**ND here I must entreat you of my Diocese, who Dissent from Our Worship, seriously to consider, with me, What it is which you have substituted in the Place of these Things, which you have entirely laid aside, tho' so expressly directed, and warranted by Scripture; and examine, whether your Way has a solid Foundation in God's Word. I shall endeavour to represent it with all Fairness and Impartiality, and leave you to judge as God shall direct you, and as you will answer it at the Last Day.

And here I find, that some of your Writers are of Opinion, *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God in some measure, for enabling their Hearts to conceive, and their Tongues to express convenient Desires to God*; and that, therefore,



*Forms of Prayer* are of no necessary Use, either in *Publick* or *Private*; on the contrary, that they stint the Spirit, and hinder Men from stirring up, or using the Gift that *God* has given them.

2. Others of you go further, and affirm, that all *Forms of Prayers* are unlawful to Christians; and that, therefore, 'tis a Sin to joyn in a Worship where they are us'd, or to be present at it.

3. That the Minister is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that he only is to speak publickly to *God* in the behalf of the People; and that they are not to joyn their Voices, but their Hearts only with him.

Upon these Principles you forsake our Worship, and many of you think it is a Sin, to be so much as present at our Religious Assemblies. It is of great Importance, therefore, that you should understand what the Scriptures determine in this Matter; for if Our Worship (which you thus forsake) be plainly enjoyn'd by Scripture

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(as I think I have made it sufficiently appear) and these Principles of *Your Worship*, and *Your Practice* pursuant to them, have no *Foundation* in Scripture; I cannot see how *you* can answer *your* forsaking Our Assemblies, to God, and *your* own Consciences, Let us, then, consider each of these Principles apart.

II. And *first*, for that Position of your *Directory*, *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God in some measure, for enabling their Hearts to conceive, and their Tongues to express convenient Desires to God*; I entreat you to consider what *Promise* or *Foundation* it has in Scripture. I profess to you seriously, That upon the strictest *Enquiry* I could make, I never could find any such *Promise made to all the Children of God*, in the Old or New Testaments; neither did I ever meet with any *Dissenter*, that was able to shew any such *Promise*, to furnish us with Words in Prayer, without the Use of Set and Premeditated Forms. If, then, there be *none* such, as we  
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*Forms of Prayer* are of no necessary Use, either in *Publick* or *Private*; on the contrary, that they stint the Spirit, and hinder Men from stirring up, or using the Gift that *God* has given them.

2. Others of you go further, and affirm, that all *Forms of Prayers* are unlawful to Christians; and that, therefore, 'tis a Sin to joyn in a Worship where they are us'd, or to be present at it.

3. That the Minister is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that he only is to speak publickly to *God* in the behalf of the People; and that they are not to joyn their Voices, but their Hearts only with him.

Upon these Principles you forsake our Worship, and many of you think it is a Sin, to be so much as present at our Religious Assemblies. It is of great Importance, therefore, that you should understand what the Scriptures determine in this Matter; for if Our Worship (which you thus forsake) be plainly enjoyn'd by Scripture

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may be well assur'd there is not; Was it not too much Presumption, in the Compilers of *your Directory*, to obtrude this Doctrine on the World, or persuade People to depend on it, and neglect the help of *Forms*, which the Scripture prescribes, and recommends to us? Nay, as there is no Promise for such extraordinary Assistance to *all the Children of God to conceive Prayer*; so neither is there any Command in Scripture, requiring us to *worship*, or *pray* to God in a Conceiv'd, Extemporary, or Unpremeditated *Prayer*, or so much as an Example in a settled ordinary Congregation where it was practis'd. If then you can shew none of these in the *Holy Scriptures*, neither *Promise* nor *Command*, 'tis a plain Case, that this *Doctrine* is a meer *Invention of Men*, and the *Worship* built on it a *Vanity*, in the Sence of Our Saviour, *Mark vii. 7*. If my Design were only to confute an *Adversary*, what I have already said were sufficient; but this *Spirit of Prayer* is a Point of such Consequence, that I  
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hope it will be both grateful, and instructive to the Readers of all Sorts, to explain it to them, and set it in as clear a Light as I can; which I shall do under the following Heads.

III. 1. First, therefore, I doubt not but it will be granted, That whosoever prayeth to God with *Faith, Sincerity, Fervency, Love, Humility, Conformity to God's Will, Understanding, and Decency of Expression*; prays *Acceptably* to Him, and is endowed with the *Spirit of Prayer*; and whoever prays without these, does want it.

2. I suppose, no Man, of himself, can attend these Graces, that are requisite to make our Prayers acceptable, and that, therefore, we must have the Assistance of God's Spirit to beget them in us.

3. I suppose, that 'tis possible for a Man to acquire, by Natural Means and Ability, to express himself decently in Prayer; tho' he cannot so acquire Faith, or any other inward Grace; so that *Decency of Expression* is the

the lowest Part of the Gift of Prayer, and not always a Part of it.

4. I say, that one Praying by a *Form*, may have all these Qualifications, and, therefore, his Prayer may be acceptable to God, and proceed from his Spirit.

This may be prov'd to the *Dissenters*, 1. From the *Assemblies Larger Catechism*, which acknowledges it : For when the Question is put, *How is the Lord's Prayer to be us'd ?* The Answer is, *The Lord's Prayer is not only for Direction, as a Pattern according to which we are to make our Prayers, but may be also us'd as a Prayer, so that it be done with Understanding, Faith, Reverence, and other Graces necessary to the right Performance of the Duty of Prayer.* 2. Many of the *Psalms* are ( as I observ'd before ) *Forms of Prayer*, and the *Dissenter* make no Scruple to turn these *Forms of Prayers* into Metre, and then sing them Line by Line after the Minister. As for Example : The First Verse of the viii Psalm runs thus, in the Translation they use,

Give:

*Give ear unto my words, O Lord,  
my Meditations weigh :  
Hear my loud cry, my King, my God ;  
for I to thee will pray.*

This is as much a *Form of Prayer*, as any in the *Litany*; and by their using it as they do, they plainly practise *Praying by a Form*: And do further also allow, That *Prayers*, as well as *Praises*, may be offer'd to God with *singing*; and that they may repeat their *Forms of Prayer* after the Minister. With what Reason, then, can it be said against us, That a *Form of Prayer* sung in Verse, and after the Minister's Reading it, is Commendable; but the same said, or sung in Prose, is Unlawful?

5. Extemporary conceiv'd Prayers may want these Spiritual Qualifications of *Prayer*, as, I believe, will not be deny'd by those that contend most for them, and they often are manifestly deficient; being sometimes perform'd without Reverence  
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or Decency of Expression, and by some, even, without Understanding; and where these Qualifications are found, others may be wanting. The Scriptures observe, *That a Man may make long Prayers*, and yet have a Mind dispos'd to *devour Widows Houses*. He may want *Faith, Humility, Fervency*, and *Affiance* in God, and yet be able to *Pray without a Form*: And, therefore, such *Prayers* are not always acceptable to God.

6. Therefore, when God promises *the Spirit of Grace and Supplications* to his People, *Zach. xii. 10.* this Promise doth not extend to enable all Men who are God's Children, to conceive with their Hearts, and express with their Mouths, convenient Desires, without a *Form*: For, as I shew'd before, every One to whom God gives a Heart and Disposition to pray, has the *Spirit of Prayer*, and he who from this Principle offers up his Desires to God in a *Form*, prays acceptably; and he

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he that offers them without that Principle, tho' he do it in unpremeditated and extemporary Words, is rejected; and, therefore, the Spirit of Prayer is the Grace, the Heart, the Disposition and Ability to pray; and whether it be with, or without a *Form*, such a Man's Prayers are acceptable to God; and it is greatly superstitious to think, or teach otherwise. If God give us a Heart to pray, and by His Providence hath provided us a *Form* to express our Desires in, or enables us to make one, 'tis sufficient, and we ought to be thankful.

7. In Confirmation of this Account of the *Spirit of Prayer*, we may further observe,

1. That no *Worship* is acceptable to God, that is not offer'd to Him in *Spirit and Truth*, *John* iv. 24. and therefore, the Scripture recommends to us *Prayers* in and by the Spirit; but that *Praying with the Spirit*, does not signify *extemporary, unpremeditated Prayers*, or exclude *Forms*, appears from *1 Cor.* xiv.

15. *I will pray with the Spirit, I will pray with the Understanding; I will sing with the Spirit, I will sing with the Understanding also.* Here we find *Singing with the Spirit*, as well as *Praying with it*; and whoever sings otherwise, doth not worship God as he ought; but tho' we are oblig'd to sing with the Spirit, yet we must and ought, to sing in the *Congregation* with a *Set Form of Words*; and, therefore, for the same Reason, tho' we *pray with the Spirit*, we may *pray by a Set and Prepared Form of Words*: The most *spiritual Songs* consist of a *Set Form of imposed Words*, and so may the most *spiritual Prayers*. *Praying, therefore, with the Spirit*, in this Place, is so far from meaning, or being an Argument for the Use of extemporary, unpremeditated Prayers, that 'tis rather an Argument against them: For either we are oblig'd by it to sing to God in Extemporary Hymns, or we are not oblig'd to pray to Him in Extemporary Prayers; since 'tis unreasonable to interpret *Singing with the Spirit*.

*Spirit* in one Sence, and *Praying with the Spirit* in a contrary.

2. And to confirm this further, We find the most spiritual Persons addressing themselves to God in *Forms*; so did *Moses*, so did *David* (as I observ'd before) and so did our *Saviour* himself on the Cross, when in his Agony, he repeated the first Verse of *Psal. xxii.* in *Syriac*, and, as some believe, the *whole Psalm*; by which Act, he recommends to us *Forms of Prayer* in his dying Breath, as the most proper Means of expressing our Condition to *God*, and as most suitable to the Divine Majesty; and, therefore, *Praying* — in the *Spirit*, Eph. vi. 18. *Praying in the Holy Ghost*, Jude 20. and *with the Spirit*, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. signify *Praying with Grace in our Hearts*, by the Assistance and Motion of the *Holy Spirit*: And a Man may as well pray with Grace in his Heart, when he *prays by a Form*, as sing with Grace in his Heart, when he *sings by a Form*.

3. We have a Promise, that *God's Spirit*



Spirit will assist us with this Grace in our Hearts, but we have no Promise that He will help us to Words without the Use of Forms; as will appear from *Rom. viii. 26. The Spirit also helpeth our Infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us with Groanings that cannot be uttered*: Those inward Motions in the Heart, call'd here *Groanings*, are that Grace in the Heart with which we ought to pray, and to which, the Spirit of God doth, and, indeed, only can help us; and to *Pray with this Grace*, is to *pray in, and with the Spirit*, whether we use Words or no; and if we do use them, whether we reduce them into a Form first, or pour them forth as they present themselves to our Minds; but we have no Promise, that the *Holy Ghost* will always furnish us with fit Words on all Occasions, and, therefore, ought not to presume that He will.

4. 'Tis certain, that He did furnish some with such Words; for we find both

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both *Prayers* and *Hymns* dictated immediately by him, of which we have Examples in the Hymns of the Blessed Virgin, and *Zacharias*, and in the Song or Prayer of *Simeon*, and in *Acts* iv. 24. But then it is manifest, that this was an Extraordinary Gift of God, and a Part of *Prophecy*, and we may not depend on the *Holy Ghost* for this Gift, more than for any other Extraordinary Gift, 'till it be made appear, that it was to continue always in the Church, and to be communicated to all the Children of God. *Praying*, and *Singing the Praises of God*, are Duties incumbent on all *Christians*; but we are no more oblig'd to *Extemporary Prayers*, from any Example of *Inspir'd Men* in Scripture, than to sing *Extemporary Hymns*, from the like Examples; to which yet none, I think, pretend.

5. 'Tis very observable, that even those who composed their *Prayers* and *Hymns* by immediate Inspiration, did not generally offer them to God in the Congregation, 'till they had first re-

reduced them into a *Form*. Thus *David* first penn'd his Psalms, and then deliver'd them to be sung, *1 Chron. xvi. 7.* and 'tis probable, the *Prophets*, *1 Cor. xiv. 26.* did the same; for they are supposed, *Every one to have a Psalm, a Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation, &c.* that is, to have them ready, and reduc'd into *Form*, for the Use of the Church, when they came together. That this is the Meaning of *having a Psalm, &c.* in this Place will appear very probable, not only from the Words, which naturally import this, and can hardly be otherwise interpreted, but likewise from the *Apostles* making a Difference between what these *Prophets* had prepar'd, and what was reveal'd immediately at the Time of their being together, *ver. 30. If any thing be reveal'd to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his Peace.* Which shews that these *Psalms, &c.* were to give Place to such as were immediately inspir'd: So far were these inspir'd Men from countenancing an Extemporary,

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porary, Unpremeditated Way of serving God, except where there was an immediate *Revelation* for it, and so utterly void of Scripture-Proof is this great Principle of the *Dissenters* Worship, *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to every one of the Faithful, to enable them to conceive with the Heart, and express with their Tongues, their Necessities to God, without a Form.*

8. It lies, therefore, my Friends, on your Teachers, who are of this Persuasion, to produce plain Scripture for your Principles, or else to confess, that you have laid aside *Prayers* by *Forms* commanded by God, and practised by *Holy Men* in Scripture, to make room for this Way of *Praying*, of Men's own Invention. But further, That Place, *Eccles. v. 1, 2.* seems to me to afford a strong Argument against such Prayers, *When thou goest to the House of God, — Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thy Heart be hasty to utter any thing before God. For God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth. Therefore let thy Words be few.*



*few.* It is hard to say, what it is to be *rash with our Mouths*, or *hasty to utter any thing before God*, if it be not *Rashness* to trust the Expressing all our Desires, to such uncertain, and unpremeditated Words, as our Invention suggests unto us, when we come before Him, which (as I have shew'd) the Scriptures give us no Promise of being supply'd to us by the Spirit on ordinary Occasions. I appeal to you, whether it would not be look'd upon as a Rashness for an ordinary Person to speak to a Prince, or solemn Assembly, concerning a Matter of great Moment, in Words unpremeditated and unform'd ; and we shall hardly find any so rash as to venture on it. King *Solomon* here seems to have recommended the same Modesty to Men, in their Addresses to *God*.

But inasmuch as *God* has not expressly forbidden all *Extemporary Prayers*, I would not be understood by this to condemn all such, as Unlawful. There may be some Men (tho'  
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not very many) able to express themselves significantly and decently, *ex tempore*; and there are some Occasions that require it, ev'n in Publick; and on these Occasions, when a Man has not Time allow'd him to reduce his Desires into *Form*, before he offers them, he may depend on the Assistance of God's Spirit, as we may in all other Cases of Necessity, or, at least, hope for Pardon of course to our Infirmities: But to depend on that Spirit, and neglect the Means God has given us to provide our selves, looks so like tempting him, that we ought, carefully, to avoid it: And I find Prudent, Modest Men are aware of this, and though they be very famous for Extemporary Prayers, yet they pray really as much by a *Form*, as if they had the *Common Prayer* before them. The Secret is only this, they compose Forms of *Prayer*, of several Sorts, digest them well in their Minds, and commit them to Memory; so that they can, on occasion, transpose

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pose the Parts of them, change, add, or leave out, as they see Reason; and thus they are, in Effect, provided with a *Form*, tho' the People cannot perceive it, and admire them for their Readiness, and Fluency. It is easie for any Man of moderate Parts to manage the Matter thus; but the more ignorant and ordinary Preachers, that know not, or are not capable of the Method of it, fall into very indecent and vain Repetitions, and are often at a loss, when they strive to practise this Way of Addressing to God.

Another Account may be given of these seeming Extemporary Prayers, not much different from the former, namely, That good Men make a Conscience of Secret Prayer to God, and have grown up in a constant Discharge of this *Duty*, do by degrees fall into a *Form* even with themselves; for how much soever their Prayers were *ex tempore* at first, yet having *continual Occasion*, of Praying to God for the same things,

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things, they find in Time, that there is but one best Way of expressing the same thing; which necessarily leads to a *Form*. However, the various Ways they made use of before they settled on one, serve them as so many *Forms* when they come in Publick: And by changing of these, they seem to Pray *ex tempore*.

10. *Lastly*, Let me observe, That the Use of *Extemporary, Conceived Prayers*, even in Cases of Necessity, is founded on a general Rule of Scripture only, which commands us to ask of God what we lack: Of which Rule our own Prudence makes the Application in such Extemporary Occasions. But when we set up this Human Application of this general Rule, in Opposition to that particular Manner of Asking, commanded by God, and practis'd by *Holy Men*, which is by Set and Premeditated *Forms* in the ordinary Worship of God, and turn God's way out of his Worship to make room for one of our own: This is to displace a particular



Command of God, on pretence of guiding our selves by a general one: In which we are not only more liable to Mistakes, but we fail of paying due Respect to God's Directions. For general Commands ought only to take Place in such Cases, where God has not laid down a particular Rule.

And thus I have examin'd the First Principle of *Dissenters*; *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God, whereby they are enabled to Conceive with the Heart, and Express with the Mouth convenient Desires to God.*

IV. I come now to speak to the Second; *That all Forms of Prayer are unlawful to Christians; and that it is a Sin to join in a Worship where they are us'd, or so much as to be present at it.* If there be any of you for whom I intend these Papers, of this Opinion, as I fear some of you are, and all of you do in your Practice, who comply with those that maintain it, and, therefore, cannot acquit your selves from Countenancing it; I desire  
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you to observe, That if there were no harm in the Opinion, or if it were a meer Speculation, we should not be much concern'd at their Mistake. But by what I have shew'd of the Scripture Authority of *Forms*, it is plain, That they, who maintain this Principle, do not only *teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; but, in Effect, set themselves up above Christ, and countermand what he has requir'd. They not only add to the Gospel a new Command, by teaching that to be Unlawful, which Christ has no where Condemned; but they teach that to be Unlawful, which He has positively Comanded. Whoever, therefore, do Teach *Forms of Prayer* to be Unlawful, or Countenance those that do Teach this *Doctrine of Men*, cannot acquit themselves from the Imputation of *Resisting the Holy Ghost*, by whose Inspiration the *Word of God* is penn'd.

I can foresee only one Thing, that can be alledg'd in Favour of those, who maintain this Opinion: And

'tis, That to *Pray with, or without a Form* (excepting the *Lord's Prayer*) is in it self indifferent; and that, therefore, the Asserting the Use of *Forms*, is not a Matter of such Weight, as to justify our Contending with our Brethren about it; and that it seems Uncharitable in Us, to insist on a Thing which they are fully persuaded is Unlawful, and we our selves count Indifferent.

I. But in Answer to this, it is to be observ'd, *First*, That an Opinion, which necessarily divides him who believes it, from the Communion of all the Establish'd Churches in the World, cannot be of so little Moment as the Objections would make it. And such is this Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms of Prayer*; since there neither is,

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Knox's Book of  
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nor has been any Establish'd Church these 1500 Years, but has maintain'd their Lawfulness, and us'd them in the Service of God; and therefore, whoever believes them  
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to be Unlawful, in whatever Age he had liv'd, he must have separated from all the Establish'd Churches of the World at that Time: And surely, an Opinion that necessarily produces such a Division, must be of mighty Consequence, whether true or false, and ought to be carefully examin'd; and if false, to be zealously opposed. But,

2. I suppose it will be granted, That Eating Swine's Flesh, or Drinking Wine, are as indifferent as using a *Form of Prayer*, and of less Concern to the Souls of Men; and that, therefore, to Teach these to be Unlawful, would be as innocent a Mistake, as to Teach the Unlawfulness of *Forms*. For if we compare these two Doctrines together, and the Mischiefs that each of them have, or may hereafter produce; it is hardly conceivable, that the forbidding the Use of some particular Meats, should have so many ill Effects, as the Forbidding *Forms of Prayer* has had already. Yet it is observable, how St. Paul judges



of that Doctrine, 1 Tim. iv. 1. *In the latter times* (saith he) *some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils.*

— *Forbidding to marry, and to abstain from Meats, which God hath created to be received with Thanksgiving.*

You see here St. Paul counts it a Departure from the Faith, and a Doctrine of Devils, to forbid, as Unlawful in it self, any Sort of Meat which God has created for the Use of Man: And if it be so Criminal, to Teach any Sort of Meat to be Unclean, when God has not forbidden it; then sure, to Teach a *Form of Prayer* to be Unlawful, when God has Commanded it, must be a very ill Doctrine. And this Consideration alone ought to make those who maintain it, or any such Doctrine, whereby they are oblig'd to condemn their Brethren, as practising Unlawful Things, to examine it carefully, and impartially by the Word of God, lest they be impos'd on by seducing Spirits.

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The great Design of the Devil, is to bring us into an entire Subjection to his Will. But when he despairs of this, his next Attempt is, to share with God in our Obedience, and, impose new Commands of his own upon us, as if they were *God's*, and so to procure himself to be *obey'd*. This he does most successfully, by giving them an Appearance of Religion, *and of more than ordinary Strictness*. Thus in *St. Paul's* Time, under Colour of *Mortification*, he forbid *Meats* and *Marriages* as *Unlawful*, which *God* had allowed; *speaking Lies in Hypocrisy, and under Shew of Religion*. And thus, 'tis to be fear'd, he has prevail'd on some, under Colour of *greater Spirituality*, to abstain from *Forms of Prayer*, as *Unlawful* which *God* has enjoined.

And here it is very remarkable, That wherever the Devil gains this Point with Men, and brings them to believe a Thing to be forbidden by *God*, which He has not forbidden, he soon brings a Super-added Com-

*mand* of his *Own* in *Competition* with some of *God's*, and prevail with them to prefer his *Commands* to *God's*; and so plungeth them into direct *Disobedience*, which was his *Design* at first. Thus when he had prevailed with Men to abstain from *Marriage*, they soon fell not only to *Commit Fornication*, but even in some Cases, to *Allow* it, rather than *Marriage* (as the *Papists* do.) And by persuading Men to abstain from *Forms of Prayer*, as *Unlawful*, he has depriv'd them, in many Places, of all Opportunity of *Publick Worship*; and made them choose rather not to serve *God* at all in *Publick*, than with a *Form*; which is the Case of many Thousands now in this Kingdom, who worship *God* Publickly no where. But,

3. This Doctrine, of the Unlawfulness of *Praying by Forms*, is no such indifferent Thing, that we may safely indulge Men in their own Sense about it; since it is very apt to puff them up, and make them take false measures

measures in judging of their own Condition, and of the Influence of God's Spirit upon them.

We know that all *good Men* have the Spirit of God, and are guided and influenced by it in the whole Tenor of their Lives; we make no Doubt, but they are assisted by Him in their Prayers, but no less in forgiving an Injury, or resisting a Temptation; and his Influence on a *good Man's* Mind, is rather greater and more sensible in these, and other acts of Religion, than in Prayer, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, are the Fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22 And it is principally by these we ought to conclude that we have that Spirit. But the Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms of Prayer*, on a Persuasion, that *the Spirit of God enables every Child of God to conceive with the Heart, and express with the Mouth suitable Desires*, entitles every one to God's Spirit in some measure, that is able to express himself in apt and fluent Words,



Words, tho' without the other Graces of the Spirit; and exposes every one to Despair, that is not able to do this, as looking on himself to be destitute of the Spirit, tho' otherwise Meek, Humble, and Charitable, and endow'd with such Graces as are much more certain Signs of His Presence. Nay, so far are many deluded by this Opinion, that they judge themselves, or others, Children of God, and in his favour, according as they are more, or less, endow'd with this Gift, without respect to other Qualifications. I dare appeal to your selves, whether some very *Immoral Persons* guilty of *gross, and scandalous Crimes*, have not been eminent for this *Gift of Prayer*? And whether such Persons are not apt to flatter themselves, that they are the Children of God, and endow'd with his Spirit, notwithstanding all their Wickedness? And it is impossible either to convince these Persons of their Mistake, or to comfort *poor Ignorant People*, deject only for want of this Gift,

Gift, whilst they are possess'd with this Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms*.

Which, in the 4th place, ought not to be countenanced, or indulg'd as an indifferent Thing, because it has been a great Hindrance to secret *Devotion*: Every Christian ought, at least, twice a Day to address himself to God in secret Prayer; but a great Part of the *World* cannot do it without a *Form*; *Children* and *ignorant Persons* are at a *Loss* for *Words*, and even *other People* are often not able to find them *readily*, especially when wearied, dull, or indispos'd, as is sometimes the Condition of the best Christians; this makes Secret Prayer, at least a *constant, regular Course* of it, uneasy to most that are absolutely against all Use of *Forms*, and it Occasions too many to neglect it, which otherwise would not: And as for *Children* and *Ignorant People* amongst those of this Persuasion, I am well assur'd, many of them never bow their Knees in secret to God; and several of those that are grown up, are forc'd to speak aloud,

aloud, or cannot Pray at all; which is against the Nature of Secret Prayer, and exposes not only the Persons that use it to the Censure of *Hypocrisie*, but the Duty to *Contempt*. 'Tis on this Account, that the Pious Custom of Training up *Young People* to a *constant course of Devotion*, in their Morning and Evening Secret Prayers, is too universally laid aside among you, as I have found by Experience; and for the Truth of the Observation, I dare appeal to all the *Dissenters*. On the contrary, I am well assured, that there cannot be a more effectual, or easy Method to revive, and continue this regular and constant Use of Secret Prayers, than to oblige every one to some certain *Forms* every Morning and Evening, which they may not omit, whatever other Prayers they use: But this can never be done, whilst the Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms* prevails; and, therefore, all good People are oblig'd to oppose it as they would retrieve the constant Use of Secret Prayers; which  
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shews, that this is no indifferent Matter, as the Objection would suggest, but of great Weight, and fit to be contended for.

I will not mention some *other Reasons* that are of great Moment because they would but exasperate, and tend to make the Duty of Prayer, when perform'd *ex tempore*, ridiculous, which ill Men might extend (as it too often happens) to expose *Devotion* in general; such are the indecent Expressions, which sometimes fall from Persons that Pray thus: I will only observe to you, That *Ex-temporary Prayers* of some Preachers, have too often given Occasion of Offence to serious Persons, even among your selves. 'Tis certain, that to Print some of them as they have been spoken, as those that we make use of are Printed, would not be for the *Honour* of the *Holy Spirit*, to whom they are ascrib'd, nor much recommend them to serious Men. But I esteem it an ill thing, for Men to ridicule one another's *Devotion*, whatever it is.

V. There



V. There remains yet the Third *Opinion* of *Dissenters*, which they advance against us in this Matter of *Prayer*, to be examin'd ; *That the Minister is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that the People have nothing to do, but to join with him in their Hearts.* An *Opinion* far from any *Authority* of *Scripture*, which expressely requires us, *Rom. xv. 6.* with *one Mind*, and *one Mouth*, to glorify God. We produce this, and many other Places and Examples in *Scripture*, for the People's joining their Voices, and bearing a Part in their Praises and Prayers ; and we are assur'd there is no *Scripture* forbids it ; and, therefore, when you condemn it, or teach it to be Unlawful, we must charge it upon You, as an Instance of *Your Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* Which is all I think needful to be said to this Head, after what I have shew'd before, in Defence of our contrary Practice from *Scripture* ; and I think, sufficient to induce you seriously to consider it.

And thus, I presume, I have faithfully

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fully examin'd the Rules and Examples the Scriptures afford us for the Performance of that Part of our Publick Worship that consists in Prayers, and compar'd the Service of our Church, and the *Dissenters* Way of Praying with them, and made it appear, that our Performance of this Duty, both as to the Matter and Manner, is agreeable to the *Commandments* of God, and to the *Examples* of *Holy Men* recorded in Scripture: And that the Service the *Dissenters* have substituted in the room thereof, has in many Particulars laid aside God's *Commands*, and deserted the *Examples* of Scripture, and is, in the main Part thereof, an immediate *Invention* of Men.

And I entreat you who are of this Persuasion, and adhere to these Principles of Worship which I have now mention'd, and shew'd to be disagreeable to Scripture, to consider seriously, whether you are not thereby literally guilty of that Sin with which our Saviour taxeth the *Jews*, *Mar. vii.*  
7. of *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments*

*mandments of Men: And also of that Superstition condemn'd by St. Paul, Col. ii. 21. which saith, Touch not, taste not, handle not; that is, which teaches to forbear those Things which God has made Lawful, after the Doctrines and Commandments of Men. And I beseech God to enlighten your Minds to make a true Judgment in it, that you may deliver your Souls.*

## C H A P. III. Of HEARING.

### S E C T. I.

*What the HOLY SCRIPTURES prescribe concerning it.*

I. **O**NE great Design of our Christian Assemblies, is *Hearing*; and that which is to be Heard, is, the *Word of God*. I shall proceed in Examining this, in the same Manner as I have done in the former Chapters; and consider,  
*First,*

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*First*, What Directions the Scriptures afford us for the Publick Performance of this Duty. *Secondly*, Shall compare our Own Practices with them: And, *Thirdly*, That of the *Dissenters*.

*First* then, God has positively Comanded us to read His *Word* in our Publick Assemblies. So *Deut.* xxxi. 10. to 14. *In the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the Place where the Lord shall choose. Thou shalt read this Law before all Israel in their Hearing. Gather the People together, Men, Women and Children, and thy Stranger that is within thy Gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the Words of this Law.* And 'tis observ'd, *Jos.* viii. 35. that there was not a *Word* of all that Moses comanded, which Joshua read not before all the Congregation.

Neither was this confin'd to their Solemn Assemblies at *Jerusalem*: It was likewise a constant Part of their *Sabbath* Service in their Synagogues; as we may learn from *Acts* xiii. 14. where



where it is observ'd, that *Paul* and *Barnabas* went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-Day, and sate down; and after the Reading the Law and the Prophets, the Rulers of the Synagogues sent unto them, &c. and *St. Paul* takes Notice, v. 27. that the Prophets were read every Sabbath-day, meaning, undoubtedly, in their Assemblies. And *St. James*, (*Acts* xv. 21.) of *Moses* his being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day.

II. This Reading the Law, was the great, and most effectual Means God provided, for Preserving the Knowledge of Himself amongst his People; and where it was omitted, the People immediately sunk into *Idolatry*; and the best Reformation began, and was carry'd on, by restoring this Ordinance. Thus 'tis observ'd of *Josiah*, *2 Chron.* xxxiv. 29. that he gather'd together all the Elders of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*. ----- And all the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and the Priests, and the Levites, and all the People great and small, and he read in the Ears all the Words of the Book of the Covenant that

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was found in the House of the Lord. The like is observ'd of Ezra, *Nehem.* viii. 3. And he read therein before the Street that was before the Water-gate, from Morning until Mid-day, before the Men and the Women, and all that could understand. 'Tis remarkable, that after the Captivity, the Jews never fell into Idolatry; and the chief Reason given by themselves, was, the strict Observation of this Ordinance of God, the Law being constantly read to them afterwards publickly in their Synagogues; so powerfully doth God bless his own Ordinances, to preserve those that use them from Error and Sin.

III. From the Practice of the Synagogue, in Reading the *Law* and the *Prophets*, the like Order was brought into the Christian Church; and Reading was made a Part of the Office of the *Christian Elders*, as 'twas before of the *Jewish*. And hence it is, that *Timothy* is commanded by St. Paul, *1 Tim.* iv. 13. to give Attendance to Reading, as well as to Exhortation and Doctrine. And the inspir'd Writings  
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of the *Apostles* were read in the Christian Assemblies, as well as the *Law* and *Prophets* among the *Jews*; according to St. *Paul's* Command, Col. ii. 16. *When this Epistle is read amongst you, cause that it also be read in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.* And it was but reason, since the Gospel contain'd the Christian Law, that it should be read in the Christian Assemblies, as well as the Law of *Moses* was in the Synagogues. And that it was so read in the first Christian Assemblies, I might shew by many Instances out of the Ancient Fathers, if there were Occasion.

IV. This Publick Reading the Law was of so great Reputation, that 'tis term'd *Preaching* it; as we may see from *Acts* xv. 21. *For Moses of old time hath in every City them that preach him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day.* The Word *Preaching* has a peculiar Sence in the *New Testament*, and signifies properly to Declare, or Proclaim the Word of God, as a He-  
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rald, or Cryer proclaims the Laws or Orders of a King. Hence only those that proclaim'd the Gospel to such as had not heard it before, or read the *Old Testament* to the People, are said to *Preach*. *Preaching* is distinguish'd from *Teaching* and *Exhortation*; and 'tis observable, that in the whole *New Testament*, tho' Reading the Scripture is call'd *Preaching*, yet Interpreting them, Applying them, or Exhorting the People from them in a Christian *Auditory*, is never call'd by *that Name*.

If it be objected, That St. Paul is said to *preach* to the Disciples, *Acts* xx. 7. when he only in Probability made a *Sermon* or *Exhortation* to Believers, as is usual now; I answer, That the *Original* of this Word (*διδάσκειν*) is never translated *Preach*, in any other Place of the *New Testament*, and should not have been here, but *discours'd, disputed, spake, or reason'd*; so it is translated in *Acts* xvii. 2, 17, 18, 19. & xix. 8, 9. *Heb.* xii. 5, &c. for the *Original* Words which properly signify *Preaching*, are *κηρύσσειν* and



and εὐαγγελίζω. From all which, it is manifest, that there are only two Ways, by which the Word of God is properly *preached*; the first is, when it is declared to those that never heard of it before; and the second is, when the very Words of the Scripture are read publicly to the People, as a Cryer doth a *Proclamation*, which he doth not word himself, but reads it in the Words, in which it is delivered to him.

In short, The Scriptures are *Sermons* out of the Mouth of God, being dictated by his *Holy Spirit*, for the Reading of which to the People, for their *Conviction and Instruction*, there is a peculiar *Command of God*; and where this *Ordinance* is duly observ'd, then they are sure of the *Word of Life*; and 'tis impossible they should be Ignorant of their Duty, for the Scriptures are sufficient to make them wise to Salvation; and the Hearing them with Humility and Attention, is a Means sufficient to beget *Faith* in the Hearts of those that

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that hear them ; for *they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good Works, as we see 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.*

V. We find in *Holy Scripture*, that the *Publick Reading of the Word of God* was with great Solemnity. 'Tis observ'd, *Nehem. viii. 5. When Ezra open'd the Book, all the People stood up, and Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the People answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their Hands, and they bowed their Heads, and worshipped the Lord with their Faces to the Ground* : And I find it generally agreed, that both the Readers and Hearers stood up whilst the Law was read, tho' not when other Things were read, or taught ; hence it is observ'd, *Luke iv. 16. that Our Saviour stood up for to read* ; and *ver. 20. after closing the Book, that He sate down to teach* : Hence *Rev. v. God* is represented, in Allusion to the *High Priest*, with a Book in his right Hand, containing

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the Revelations of his Will ; and the *Lamb*, as his Minister, takes it out of his Hand to declare the Contents of it ; and *ver. 8.* *When he had taken the Book, the four Beasts and four and twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb. --- And they sung a new Song ;* The Angels joyn with them, *ver. 11.* And the whole Creation, *ver 13.* From whence we see, the Scriptures teach us to receive the Revelations of God's Will out of the Book of Life, with Adoration and Praises : And therefore we find, that at the reading the Law, Confessions and Praises of God, were intermixed, and succeeded one another ; *Nehem. ix. 3.* *And they stood up in their Place, and read in the Book of the Lord their God, one fourth part of the Day, and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God.*

VI. We find that the Word of God is to be read in such a Language, as the People understand. After the *Captivity*, the People being Born and Educated in a strange Land, their

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their Language was chang'd, and they did not understand, at least, Universally, the pure *Hebrew* in which the Law was first written ; therefore when *Ezra* read in the Law, a certain number of the *Priests* and *Levites* interpreted the Words of the Law, as *Ezra* read them to the People: *Nehem. viii. 8. And they caused the People to understand the Law, and the People stood in their Place ; so they read in the Book, and in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the Sence, and caused them to understand the reading : And this Custom continueth among the Jews to this Day ; first the Hebrew Text is read, and then a Translation, or Paraphrase in a Language understood by the Hearers. And indeed, there may be good Reason for reading the Originals in Publick Assemblies, such a Custom being an effectual Means to preserve the Knowledge of them ; but they cannot be useful to the People without a Translation. Therefore, St. Paul doth not absolutely forbid speaking in unknown Tongues in the Church,*



but orders, 1 Cor. xiv. 27. *Let one interpret; but if there be no Interpreter, let him keep Silence in the Church.*

VII. We find, that after Reading the Word of God, there was sometimes an *Enlargement*, or *Comment* on some Part of it, and an *Exhortation* to the People: Thus when Our Saviour had read a Portion of Scripture, he apply'd it to the People in a Discourse to that Purpose. But it doth not appear, that this was constantly done; on the contrary, it is rather probable that it was not. For had there been a constant Provision for such Enlargement, and Exposition of the Law, and Exhortation from it, there had been no Occasion for the Rulers of the Synagogue, *Acts* xiii. 15. to send to Saint Paul and Barnabas, after the Reading of the Law and Prophets, that Message we find there, *Ye Men, and Brethren, if ye have any Word of Exhortation for the People, say on.* St. Paul supposes him who Teaches, and him whose Office it was to Exhort, distinct from him

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him that *Ruled*, and him that *Ministred*, *Rom. xii.* And it doth not appear, that every Church was furnish'd with all these *Officers*. The same Saint *Paul* join'd *Exhortation* and *Doctrine* with *Reading*, in his Charge to *Timothy*, *1 Tim. iv. 13.* which shews, that they went together, but whether indispensably or no, does not appear; tho' it is manifest, in the *Practice* of most Churches in the Ages after the Apostles, they were all generally exercised in the Publick Worship.

VIII. *Lastly*, We find that they had a *Summary* of the Principal *Doctrines* of the Gospel, which they deliver'd to the People, and by which they order'd their own Discourses, and judg'd of what was deliver'd by others. Thus *St. Paul* to *Timothy*, *2 Tim. i. 13.* *Hold fast the Form of Sound Words which thou hast heard of Me; and Ch. ii. 2.* *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others:* Perhaps, this may be that *Proportion of Faith*, according to which the *Prophets*.

phets are exhorted to prophesy, *Rom. 12, 6.* I think, 'tis not doubted, but this *Form of sound Words* contain'd the main Fundamentals of Christianity; and *St. Paul* tells us what those were, *Heb. vi. 1, 2.* Therefore, leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto Perfection; not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptisms, and of Laying on of Hands, and of the Resurrection of the Dead, and of the Eternal Judgment. In all Probability, therefore, the Form of sound Words deliver'd by *St. Paul* to *Timothy*, and by him to others, contain'd these six Heads of Principles of Christianity, which every Christian was oblig'd to hear, and learn.

## S E C T. II.

*The Practice of Our Church, in Reading, and Preaching the Word.*

**T**Hese are the Rules and Examples the Scriptures propose to us, for our Feeding the People with the Word  
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of Life, and their Hearing, it in Publick. Let us, in the Second Place, compare the *Practice of our Church* with them, and surely no Copy can come nearer the Original.

1. For *first*, Our Ministers are expressly oblig'd, in their Ordination, diligently to read all the *Canonical Scriptures* of the *Old* and *New Testament*, unto the People Assembled in the *Church*, where they shall be appointed to serve.

2. Our Church has dispos'd the *Holy Scriptures* in a certain Order, and has appointed four, or more Chapters to be read every Day in the Publick Congregations, by which Means all the most edifying Parts of the *Old Testament* are Order'd to be read once a Year, and the ~~Old~~ *New Testament* (except the *Revelations*) thrice in the same Time; and some select Chapters of the *Revelations* are appointed on extraordinary Occasions. There are, indeed, some Chapters (about one Tenth) of the *Old Testament* left out of this Order; but then 'tis to be observ'd,

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serv'd, that those which are left out, are either Genealogies, Names of Persons, and Places, Historical Repetitions, or some obscure and mystical Prophecies in *Ezekiel*, which are not so proper for an ordinary Assembly, (for which Reasons, some Part of the *Revelations* is also left out) yet these are not excluded, tho' not particularly Commanded. The general Obligation on every Clergyman, in his Ordination, to *read all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament*, still allows him to read these, and also obliges him to it, when he shall perceive, that it may be for the Edification of the People.

3. Besides this Order for the whole Scriptures, on every *Lor'ds-Day*, and other solemn Occasions, there are appointed certain select Portions out of the Epistles, and Gospels to be read, which are adapted to the Occasion; and contain some great Mystery of our Faith, or other weighty Matter necessary to our Edification.

4. For the more Solemnity of these  
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Readings ; Our Church joins with each of them Praises, Thanksgivings, or Confessions, according to what we find practis'd in the *Holy Scriptures*.

5. That the People may Benefit, and be Edify'd, by *hearing* the Word of *God*, a Plain, Authentick, and most Excellent Translation is provided by *Publick Authority*, in which the Scriptures are read to the People. This was the first Care of our Church in the Reformation ; and the generality of *Dissenters* are forc'd to be beholden to it for the Word of Life, and draw all the Knowledge that they have, from the Fountains which our Bishops open'd for them, by Translating the Word of *God*, and putting it into a Language they understand.

6. 'Tis order'd in Our Church, that the Minister shall explain some Part of the *Holy Scriptures* every *Lord's Day*, and Exhort their Congregations in a Sermon.

7. To inculcate the great Mysteries

of our Faith the better, Our Church has appointed certain Solemn Times, wherein once in the Year, they are oblig'd to explain, and inculcate every great Mystery of our Faith, and most material Passages of the Gospel : Such are the Conception, Birth, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Our *Saviour*.

Lastly, There is provided a *Form of Sound of Words*, in a short and plain *Catechism* ; in which are contained the first Principles of the *Oracles of God* ; this is adapted, as it ought to be, to the Capacity of Children, and is, indeed, *sincere Milk*, without School Notions, or hard Words. And all the six Principles which the Apostle mentions, *Heb. vi. 1, 2.* are briefly explained in it, and yet largely enough to make those that attend to it, wise to Salvation. The Teaching, and Explaining these Fundamentals, is a Part of our Publick Instruction, and enjoyn'd as a constant Duty on Ministers and People in our solemn Worship. The Minister in each  
Parish

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Parish being requir'd diligently upon *Sundays* and *Holy Days* — openly in the Church to instruct, and examine so many Children of his Parish sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some Part of the Catechism, and the People are oblig'd to come at the Time appointed, and obediently to hear.

And by our Twelfth *Canon* for the better grounding of the People in the Principles of Christian Religion, 'tis ordain'd, That the Heads of the Catechism being divided into so many Parts as there are *Sundays* in the Year, shall be explain'd to the People in every Parish-Church.

This is the Care our Church has taken to Teach the People in their Publick Assemblies; and the Method is so effectual, that 'tis scarce conceivable, how any one who duly conforms to these Orders, should be ignorant of any Thing that concerns his Soul.

And by the Blessing of God, the Effect is such, that we may affirm, without Vanity or Partiality, That  
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our *Clergy*, and *Laity*, especially where we can prevail with them to conform to the Rules of our Church, are generally much more knowing, modest, governable, devout and charitable, than perhaps may be found in any other Church; of which our late Contests with the *Papists*, and Behaviour under their Government, since the present Revolution, are evident Proofs.

### S E C T. III.

*The Practice of the Dissenters, in Hearing and Reading the Word.*

**I** Come now to consider with you, my Friends, who *Dissent* from us, how this great Duty of Teaching the People the Law of God, is perform'd in your Assemblies, and to compare your Practice in this Point, with the Scripture *Rules* and *Examples*. Which I shall do with the same Candor and Integrity, that I have hitherto endeavour'd to observe.

I. And here I must needs say, that your Teachers seem to have had very little

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little Regard, either to Scripture *Rules* or *Examples* in framing this Part of your *Worship*, having laid aside all those Methods of *Instruction*, that the Scriptures recommend to us, except it be that of Exposition and Exhortation; which, among you, is call'd *Preaching*: Insomuch, that tho' a Man frequent your *Meetings* all his Life, yet he has no Security, or hardly Possibility, of Learning from your Publick Teachings, all the great Mysteries of his Religion, or the necessary Principles of his Faith.

1. For *first*, Your Preachers are entirely left to their Choice, what Place of Scripture they will explain, or what Subject they will handle: And hence it happens, that hardly any one Man in his Life, ever goes through the necessary Articles of Faith, or of Practice in his Publick Sermons; and for the Truth of this, I appeal to your selves.

2. You have no Summary of Principles enjoyn'd to be either Read, or Taught in your Publick Assemblies.

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A *Catechism* you have, but neither your *Directory* nor *Practice* make it any Part of your *Lord's-Day Service*: And besides, your *Catechism* is such, that it no ways answers the Design of a *Form of Sound Words*. I have already shew'd, that such a *Form* should contain only the first, and necessary Principles of the *Oracles of God*, in such Words and Methods, as may make it easily apprehended, and retain'd by the Weak and Unlearned, which make up the Bulk of the People. But your *Catechism* is full of *Hard Words*, *School-Terms* and *Abstruse Notions*, no wise necessary to be known by the Generality of Christians, or possible to be understood by Children, or unlearned Persons, for whose Edification, principally, a *Catechism* ought to be contriv'd. Besides all this, 'tis so long and intricate, even the *Shorter*, that not one Child in ten ever gets it by Heart, nor one in five Hundred retains it, as I have found by Experience, and desire, that you would judge of this Matter as you find

find upon Trial. *Lastly*, After all, it is imperfect ; some of the Principles of the *Apostles Catechism* being quite left out of it, I mean, *Laying on of Hands*, joyn'd with *Baptism*, Heb. 6.

2. A great Defect sure in a *Catechism*, to leave out a Fundamental of Christianity.

II. But the most sad, and deplorable Defect of your Performance of this Duty, is your Casting out the Reading of the *Word of God* from most of your Publick Assemblies, directly contrary to *God's Institution* and *Ordinance* for the *Instruction* of his Church ; insomuch, that in many of your Meetings, setting aside a Verse or two for a *Text*, or *Quotation*, at the Discretion of the *Teacher*, the Voice of *God* is never publicly heard among them. This is Matter of Fact, and undeniable ; and in all the Meetings in the *North of Ireland* in a whole Year, perhaps there is not so much Scripture read, as in one Day in Our Church, by the strictest Enquiry which I could make.

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One would think, this alone were sufficient to shew the People where the *Worship of God*, is to be found in its *Purity*, and to prove Our Assemblies to be the *True Church of God*, against all that come in Competition with us; whereof some hide the *Word of God* in a strange Language, and others banish it out of their Meetings. It being in Our Congregations only, that the Voice of *God* is heard speaking to his *People*, without *cover or gloss*. Sure it is a sad Thing, that a Man may go to most Meetings many Years, and never hear one entire Chapter read in them. Now this Omision is the more inexcusable in you, and must render you manifestly self-condemn'd.

I. First, Because you so vehemently press the Necessity of *Preaching*, and quote the *Holy Scripture* to prove it: In which, Reading the *Law* (as is shew'd before) is term'd *Preaching*, *Acts* xv. 21. but Interpreting the Scriptures, Applying them, or Exhorting the Congregation from them,

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in a fix'd Christian Auditory, (which you count *Preaching*) is never call'd so in the whole New Testament : Therefore, by laying aside the Reading the Scriptures in your Publick Assemblies, you have intirely cast aside Preaching, in the proper Scripture Sence of it. But,

2. This must render you self-condemned, because you pretend to honour the Holy Scriptures above other Christians : Your Mouths, Commendably, and with just Reason, are continually full of Praises of the Holy Bible ; you own it, with the generality of the Reform'd Churches, for the only sufficient Rule of Faith ; you appeal to it, and seem to found your selves on it : And yet your not allowing the Reading of it a constant Place in your Religious Assemblies, makes it seem as if you had a very low Opinion of it in your Hearts. If you really value it as you profess, Why do you banish the Reading of it from your Publick Worship, to  
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make room for Discourses, Lectures, and Sermons of your own Teachers? Remember of whom it is said, *Mark vii. 9. This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me,* While you thus juttle the Word of God out of your Solemn Meetings, to make room for your own Sermons, I beseech you to consider, Whether this be not a Laying aside the Commandments of God, for Men's Inventions; unless you will call your *Sermons* (as some *Quakers* are said to do) as much the *Word of God* as the Bible.

III. I look on this as so material a Point, and conceive the *Honour of the Holy Scriptures*, and the *Salvation of Christians*, to be so deeply concern'd in it, that I think my self oblig'd to examine the Pretences I have found to justify it: Tho' I confess, they seem to me so weak, that I am afraid I shall be almost suspected, by indifferent Persons, not to do Justice in representing them: For it is unaccountable, that any Body should urge so *slight Reasons* for so *considerable* an Omission.

*Omission* : And yet these are all I have ever met with, or heard from you.

The first Reason I have heard urg'd, is, *That the People are oblig'd to read the Scriptures at Home; and being thus acquainted with them, the reading of them is not necessary in their public Meetings.* But to this I answer,

1. That we see, from what has been said, *That the Reading of the Holy Scriptures is by God's Appointment a Part of his solemn Publick Worship; therefore, to leave it out in our Assemblies, on any Pretence whatsoever, is to lay aside his Command, and so to corrupt and dismember his Worship.*

2. The Private Performance of a Duty, ought by no Means to interfere with, or hinder the Publick. We must pray to *God*, praise Him, and instruct our Families in Private; and yet *God* forbid, that our doing these *privately*, should banish the Use of them in our *Publick Assemblies*; or that any one should think himself excused from Attending on the Publick Performance of them, on Account of his



his Private Diligence in them : And the same Rule holds for Reading the *Holy Scriptures*.

3. God tells the Children of *Israel*, Deut. vi. 6. *That these Words which I command thee this Day shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up-- and thou shalt write them on the Posts of thy House.* Here is as much private Diligence in Reading and Teaching the *Law* requir'd of the *Israelites*, as any *Christian* can pretend to exercise; and yet all this Care to preserve the Knowledge of the *Law* by *private Study* and *Exercise*, did not make the Reading it in their *Synagogues* unnecessary, or prevent God from requiring them to use it as a Part of his Publick Worship, Deut. xxxi. 11. And, therefore, all your Diligence in Reading the Scriptures privately, or *Your Teachers* exhorting, and requiring you to do it, ought not to warrant *Their* or *Your* dis-

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dispensing with the *Command of God*, that appoints the Reading his *Word*, as a Part of His Publick Service. But,

4. When People are left to themselves in Private, they may either do, or not do a Thing, as they please: And we are assur'd, That there are many who come to Church, and hear the *Word of God* read there, that neither can, nor ever would be at the Pains to read it in Private. It is, therefore, a great Temptation to the People, to be negligent; and a great Want of Care in a Church, to leave so material a Thing as *the Reading of the Word of God*, to private Diligence. We find by Experience, that where no Publick, Effectual Care is taken to inform the Generality of Men, the *Knowledge of God's Word* sensibly decays, and is in a fair Way to be lost. The *Papists* read the *Scriptures* in a Language that the People do not understand; and we see into what *gross Ignorance* they are fallen by this Means. Those of Your  
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*Persuasion* (generally speaking) do not read them at all in *your Meetings*; and the Consequence of this is, That *many of your common People are Strangers to the very History of the Bible, and the first Principles of Christianity*; as I have found on *Trial*, to my great *Trouble and Astonishment*. This Pretence, therefore, of *People's Reading the Holy Scriptures in private*, will by no Means justify you, for breaking God's Command, in omitting the *publick Reading them* as a Part of God's Service in the Congregations.

The second Pretence that I have met with for this Omission, is, That *since the Penning of the Scriptures, and settling of the Church by the Apostles, the Case is much alter'd with Christians, That Printing was not then known, and consequently Copies of the Bible were few, and hard to come by: Few could then read them, if they had them; and therefore (say some) Reading the Scriptures in the Assemblies was then absolutely necessary, otherwise the Generality must have been Strangers to them. But now*  
Copies

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*Copies of the Bible, by Means of Printing, are become common, and easy to be had, and most Families have some in them that can read: And therefore the Publick Reading them is not now necessary.*

1. The plain Answer to this is, *First*, That the Reading the Scriptures Publickly, is an *Institution of God*: Therefore to lay it aside on the Account of the Invention of Printing, is in Effect to say, That Men have found out a better Way to propagate the Knowledge of *God's Word*, than He instituted; and plainly to lay aside his *Command*, for *Men's own Inventions*.

2. God has promis'd, that there shall be always *Religious Assemblies*, and has commanded his *Word* to be read in them, which is a Certain Means to preserve the Knowledge thereof, as long as there is a Church; but He has no where promis'd the constant Commonness of Bibles, nor Ability to People to read them at Home. To omit, therefore, the *Institution of God for Teaching his Word*,  
and



and to rely on the People's Procuring, and Reading Copies of the Bible privately, is to leave God's Way, and presumptuously depend on *that* which has no Promise annexed to it.

3. How easy soever we may imagine the obtaining Copies of the Bible, and notwithstanding the Number of those that can read, there are still many Families, even amongst *Protestants*, that can neither compass a Bible, nor get any to read it, if they had one; and, therefore, this Expedient is no ways sufficient to supply the Design of God's *Institution*, in commanding it to be read publickly.

4. Let us suppose Bibles to be as common as we can desire, and that every one can read them, yet who will secure us that they will do it? People, whilst the first Fervour of a *Reformation* is on them, may perhaps be diligent so long as the Scripture is a Novelty to them, or Zeal for a Party inspirits them; but when this wears off, as it generally does in a little Time, we see by Experience, that

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that their Care of Reading, and Meditating in the Scriptures decays with it; and there are at this Day, *too many* of all Parties, that neither read themselves, nor hear one Chapter read in a whole Year, except at Church. And, therefore, to omit the publick Reading them, on Presumption that the People will do it themselves, since it is so easie for them to do it, is the *ready way* to introduce an Universal Ignorance of *God's Word*, and reduce us again to *Popery*; the most effectual Bar against which, is the Bible in our own Language.

5. People may be oblig'd to come to the Publick Congregation, and hear the *Word of God* read, tho' they have no Inclination to it; and when they neglect, they may be reprov'd, or punish'd: But this is not practical, when the Scriptures are requir'd only to be read in private Families, Experience shews us, that there is great Difference between these two Methods in Point of Efficacy. We see in *England* and *Wales*, where

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publick Reading was practis'd, the People generally embrac'd the Reformation ; but in *Ireland*, where the same Care was not taken, they rejected it. Had *God's Way* been taken, and the *Scriptures* as constantly read to the Native *Irish*, in a Language they understood, as it was in *England* and *Wales*, there is a little doubt but the Reformation had succeeded as Universally here, as it did there ; but the want of this, has kept them in Ignorance *to this Day* ; which may convince us , how ineffectual all our Contrivances are to enlighten Men, in respect of *God's Institution*. I am persuaded, that if ever the Native *Irish* be brought to the Knowledge of *God's Word*, it must be by having it read to them, publickly in a Language they understand, and not by thrusting Bibles privately into their Hands ; of the Ineffectualness of which, we have had an Experiment 150 Years.

6. But Lastly, Instead of all other Arguments, None of us are Ignorant,

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rant, that the *Word of God* cannot be presum'd to have the same Efficacy, when read privately, as it has when read in the Assembly of *Christians*, according to God's Appointment; since he has given us a peculiar Promise to be present in such Assemblies. And there are no diligent *Hearers of the Word* publickly read, but are able from their own Experience to testify, that they often find it to have a different Force and Efficacy, when they hear it read, as a Part of his *Ordinance*, in the Publick Assemblies, in which He has peculiarly promis'd his Presence, than when they read it in private by themselves.

The third Pretence I have found alledg'd, for omitting the regular *Reading the Bible* in your Meetings, is, *That it takes up too much Time, and is a hindrance to the more profitable Duty, of what you commonly call Preaching.*

1. I entreat you to consider, That there is a Time for every Thing; and since God has appointed *Reading his*  
G 2 *Word,*



*Word*, a Time and Room, in our Publick Assemblies ; Who are we, that we should presume to throw it out ? This, surely, is to set up our selves against *God*, and to think that we are able to order Things better for the Edification of his Church, than He has done. Surely we ought rather to take care to dispose our *Sermons*, that they may not interfere with any other *Institution* of *God* : But, that whatever Time we allow them, there may remain sufficient for *Reading God's Holy Word* ; which I have prov'd, is in Scripture-Language, *Preaching* : And, therefore, to juggle this out, to make our own Discourses longer, is plainly to prefer our Way of *Preaching* to *God's*. If there were a Necessity, that one or the other must be omitted, Modesty ought to teach us to omit our own Words, rather than *God's*.

2. Suppose that upon some Extraordinary Occasion, it may be *Lawful* to omit *Reading God's Word* in our Assemblies, that we may have the  
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more Time to manage a Discourse for the *Instruction* of the *People*, yet it can never be justifiable to make this a common Practice; which is to put a manifest Contempt on the *Word of God*.

A Fourth Pretence against Reading the *Scripture* publicly in a regular Method, is, *That they are hard to be understood, or apply'd; and therefore only so much of them ought to be read at a Time, as the Minister may explain, and apply to his Auditory: And that one Verse thus apply'd, is better than many Chapters read without such Application.*

1. It is to be consider'd, First, That it is against the general Opinion of the *Reformed Churches*, who universally teach, That the *Scriptures* are plain, in all Things necessary to Salvation. And, therefore, there is not that universal Necessity of an Explanation of every Place of *Scripture* that is to be read, as is pretended.

2. The *Holy Scriptures*, when heard with *Humility* and *Attention*, apply

themselves better than any Man can do it. The *Words* of them are the *Words of God*, and they have a *Plainness*, *Force*, and *Spirit* in them, which no Human Eloquence can improve; and, therefore, it is a great Affront to them to say, that they have little Efficacy except a Minister apply them.

3. Suppose one Verse well applied to be better than many Chapters, (for which there is no colour,) yet this would not justify the Omission of Reading them publicly; for no *Application*, can be so well made of them, whilst People are not thoroughly acquainted with them. It ought, therefore, to be our first Care to read them to the *People*, often and solemnly, that they may be acquainted with the whole Body of them, and then one Word of *Application* may do more good, than many Sermons, to *People* not so prepar'd with the general Knowledge of them.

The *Literal* Knowledge of the Will of God must always go before the Sa-  
ving,

ving, and is the best *Introduction* to it. Now the Reading the *Law* in the Ears of the People, is the Means appointed by God to teach them that *Literal* Knowledge; and, therefore, while your *Teachers* have laid aside this Means of Gods *Appointment*, they have in a great Measure debarr'd People of the *spiritual* and *saving* Knowledge of his *Will*.

4. Reading a Verse or two, and trusting to the Minister's *Application*, without the People's being acquainted with the whole Body of the Scriptures, do's put Christians too much in the Power of their *Teachers*, and makes them liable to be seduced by them. This is the very Artifice, whereby the *Romish* Priests keep their People in Ignorance; and your *Teachers* using the same Method (while it is manifest, that so great a Part of their People either do not, or cannot read them at Home) seems too like a Design on their *Hearers*, and tempts the World to suspect, that they are afraid of the naked Simplicity of the



Scriptures, since they dare not trust their People with *Hearing* them *Publickly* read, except they add their own Glosses to them.

The fifth Pretence that I have met with, for laying aside the Publick Reading the *Word of God*, is, *That the dead Letter* (as some call it) *is a dull, formal thing, without Spirit or Life, where it is not apply'd to the Souls of Men, by the Spirit of God speaking in, his Ministers ; and that without such Assistance, the Scriptures have little Efficacy on the Heart.*

I hope there are few of any Communion will own this Pretence, since it is so horrid a Reflection and Affront on the *Word of God*. I will, however, in Answer to it, offer these following Considerations.

1. That the *Holy Scriptures* give a Character of themselves very different from this. They represent the *Word of God*, as the *Sword of the Spirit*, as *quick and powerful*, as *able to make a Man wise to Salvation*, as *giving Wisdom to the Simple*, as *converting the Soul*,  
with

with many other Expressions to denote the *Efficacy* thereof on the Hearts of Men ; and therefore, to reflect on the *Word*, as *dull* and *formal*, as a meer *dead Letter*, that cannot engage the Attention of the *Hearers*, or reach their *Hearts*, is too near Blasphemy.

2. We are certain, that God speaks to us immediately by his *Holy Spirit* in his *Word*: And where the *Spirit of God is, there is Power*. But when Men speak their *own Words*, or pretend to apply the *Words* or *Passages* of Scripture, tho' they seem to do it with the greatest Zeal and Learning, yet they may be mistaken ; nay, they may deceive us : And, therefore, wholly to lay aside the immediate Dictates of the *Holy Ghost* recorded in the Scriptures, for any pretended *Explication*, or *Application* made by Men, is manifestly to exchange God's Undoubted Words and Command, for what may be a meer *Human Invention*.

3. 'Tis to be consider'd, That the People have always been apt to grow

weary of the Service of God in the way of his own Appointment, and complain of it, as dull and tedious; so *Mal. i. 13. Ye said also, what a Weariness is it, and ye snuffed at it.* And the Reason is, because the Way of God's Appointing is always more Spiritual, in respect of that which is of Man's own *Invention*; and, therefore, it cannot be so easy, or agreeable to the Carnal Minds of Men.

4. It ought, therefore, to be consider'd by you, when People complain of being dull, and unaffected, by meer *Hearing the Word of God* read, whether this do not truly proceed from a Carnal and Wicked Heart estranged from the *Spirit of God*; and whether the Reason, that Sermons please, and affect more than a Chapter out of the *Bible*, be not the Novelty, and Outward Ornaments of them, rather than the Spiritualness of the Discourse. We are sure *St. Paul* supposes such as are not affected with the *Words of God*, to be meer Natural or Carnal Men, *1 Cor. ii. 13.* where  
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having taken Notice of speaking, *Not in Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*; he adds, *But the Natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are Foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.* From whence it clearly follows, that the Reason, why Men do not understand, or receive the things of God delivered to them in the *Words of Scripture*, dictated by the *Holy Ghost*, is, because they are meer Natural Men, and want the *Spirit of God*. Whoever, therefore, is more affected, or delights more in a Sermon, than in a Chapter of the *Bible*, has Reason to look into his Heart, and examine himself whether he has the *Spirit of God*. Those mention'd in Scripture that had that *Spirit*, delighted in the *Law of God*: It was the Joy of their Hearts; they preferr'd it to all Things, they *meditated in it Day and Night*; and were so far from turning it out of their Publick Assemblies, that the *Hearing* it read was a  
great



great Part of their Worship. Whoever, therefore, lays aside this *Practice*, have Reason to suspect that they want that *Temper* and *Spirit*, with which those *Holy Men* were inspir'd; and notwithstanding all their Pretences to a more than an ordinary Spiritualness and Reformation, are little advanc'd above the Natural Men, that neither receive, or relish the things of God, at least, not as they ought.

I find it alledg'd as a *sixth Pretence* for not Reading the *Word of God* in your Meetings, *That a Child may read them, and perform this Duty; and then what need it take up the Minister's Time?*

To which there need no other Answer, than that the Service of God is not less His, or the less to be valu'd because it is easy. On the contrary, 'tis the more sinful to neglect it, the more easy it is. Ministers are not set a part for difficult things only, which others cannot perform; but they are to execute the Office that God has impos'd on them, whether it be easy,

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or difficult. As for Example: God has Commanded his Ministers to *Baptize, in the Name of the Father, &c.* Now to pour on Water in this *Form* is no such difficult thing, but a Child, or any else might perform it: Neither is there any greater Difficulty in the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, as to the *Essentials* of it. Yet, I suppose, it will be granted by all, that it belongs only to the Minister's Office to perform these, and they must not delegate them, or any Part of them to others, or omit them because they are easy; and that they have a quite different Sacredness, Efficacy and Force, when perform'd by a Person Ordain'd, and Authoriz'd to this Purpose, than when perform'd by another: And the same Rule holds in Offering up our Prayers, and in *Reading the Scriptures*: A Man may read them at Home, a Child may read them in the Church, but they have not the same Assurance of Efficacy, and a Blessing, as when they come from the Mouth of a Person set  
a-part.

a-part by God's Ordinance for this Purpose.

I make no Doubt, but the Experience (as I have said) of most Christians, from what they have felt in their own Hearts in *Hearing the Word of God Publicly read*, will attest the Truth of this. Now, if you, my Friends, know, and own this, as I hope the Generality of you do, you must see the Unreasonableness of this Pretence. If any of you do not know it, you must give me Leave to say, that I fear 'tis from Ignorance, and not considering the *Scriptures*: And 'tis *your Teachers Duty* to inform you better. *Reading the Scriptures* being allow'd by the *Directory* to be a Part of God's Publick Worship. We have this Rule there in express Words, *That it is requisite, that all the Canonical Books be read over in Order, that the People may be better acquainted with the whole Body of Scriptures*. Now if you can shew but one Meeting in the Last Age, in which this has been duly perform'd, we will not accuse you

so generally Violating God's Command in this Point, but if there be not one such Meeting, you ought to consider, how you will excuse yourselves before God. And I think it necessary here to observe to you, how insignificant general Rules are, without descending to a particular Determination of Circumstances. Here we have in your *Directory*, a general Rule (such as it is) for *Reading* the Scripture: But for want of being particular, as the *Calendar* in our *Common-Prayer-Book* is, I question, if it yet was ever once observ'd, or, indeed, that it is *Practical* to observe it. And it is so almost in every other general Rule; and, therefore, to leave the Service of God to be Order'd by such general Rules only, is, in Effect, to *Teach* People to neglect it.

V. These are all the *Reasons* that I can possibly think of, or have heard urg'd for your Practice in this Point. I will not say, but others may be pretended, but I must profess, that I do not remember to have met with them;  
if



if I had, I would have given them a due Consideration : I am persuaded, that they cannot be of greater Force than those I have examin'd : And that they can never excuse *You* in this Matter, from manifest Breach of *God's Command*, in preferring *Men's Invention* to his *Institution*.

After all, I must profess to *You*, That I look on all these to be only Pretences ; and that the true Reason of *Men's Negligence* in this *Duty*, is given us, *2 Tim. iv. 3. For the Time will come* (saith the Apostle) *when they will not endure Sound Doctrine ; but after their own Lusts shall they heap up to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears*. An *itching Ear* here, can signify nothing so properly, as an Ear that loves *Novelty* and *Variety* : Because, therefore, our Church gives the People little that is New in her *Prayers*, or *Reading the Scriptures*, but retains a *Form of Sound Words* in the one, and the plain *Word of God* in the other ; Hence it is, that some People cannot endure our Service, but heap up to them-

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themselves *Teachers*, that instead of the *Praises, Prayers* and *Sermons* of God's *immediate Appointment*, will gratify them every Meeting with a *New Prayer*, without troubling them with such *Prayers* or *Sermons* as they think *old*, which are incomparably better, only the *Itching Ears* of the People, as the Apostle foretold, are pleas'd with the *Novelty* and *Variety* of the one, and disgust the *Reputation* of the other, as the *Israelites* did that of *Angels Food*, *Psal.* lxxviii. 25. *Numb.* xxi. 5. and xi. 6.

It is the Duty of all Ministers, and the Business of the truly Conscientious, to check and curb this Humour in the People; and notwithstanding all Discouragements, the Ministers of *Our Church*, instead of Complying with them, have constantly reprov'd them for their Negligence and Levity, where they found them guilty. But as *Aaron*, to please the *Israelites*, made the *Golden Calf*; so some Ministers (tho' contrary to their *own Principles*) have chang'd God's *Institution* to please

please *their People*; and left out the constant, and regular Reading of *God's Word*, because their People grew weary of it. But let all Men judge, who behave themselves most like the *Ministers of Christ*; We, who keep to the *Reading God's Word*, according to *His own Institution*, whether the People will hear, or forbear; or, They that *comply with them*, and lay aside *God's Command*, to oblige and gain them.

## CHAP. IV.

## Of BODILY WORSHIP.

## SECT. I.

*What the HOLY SCRIPTURES prescribe concerning it.*

I. **T**HE Fourth Part of the Publick Worship of God, or Design of Religious Assemblies, is *Visible*, or *Bodily Adoration*;

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tion; such amongst us, are *Uncovering the Head, Bowing, Kneeling*, and other Outward Signs of *Reverence* and *Submission*, by which we openly acknowledge the *Mercy*, the *Justice* and *Power* of God, and express the Inward Sense we have of these Attributes.

In treating of this Head, I will keep my self to the same *Method* as in the former; and consider, *First*, The *Rules* and *Examples* that the *Scriptures* afford us for the Performance of this Duty. *Secondly*, Compare the *Practice* of our Church with them. *Thirdly*, Examine the *Dissenters Practice*, and the *Reasons* they alledge for it.

1. As to the First of these, we find a *Positive Command* of God, for *Bodily Worship* in Publick, *Psal. xcv. 6. O come let us worship, and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* The 2d Verse of this Psalm plainly shews us, that this is meant of Publick Worship: *Let us come before his Presence with Thanksgiving.* And that this *Bowing* or *Kneeling* is to be interpreted *literally*, not *figuratively*, appears from the same Verses,



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Verſes, where *Singing, Thankſgiving,* and *Pſalms*, are all *literally* to be underſtood; and there is no more reaſon for underſtanding *Bowing* and *Kneeling* in a figurative Sence, than the other.

II. The ſame *Bodily Worſhip* is requir'd by the Second Commandment, which forbids us to *bow down to a graven Image*, by which Words we are commanded to *bow down* to God; for it is confeſs'd by all, and laid down as a Rule by the *Aſſemblies larger Catechiſm*, That the *Negative Commandments include in them the contrary Poſitive*; that is to ſay, When a Commandment forbids us any thing, it requires us to perform the Duty contrary to what is forbidden. As for Example: When the Firſt Commandment forbids us to *have any other Gods before the Lord*, it requires us to own, and worſhip Him for our only God: And after the ſame manner all other Commands are to be interpreted. By which Rule, when the Second Commandment, *Exod. xx. 5.* forbids us in theſe Words, *Thou ſhalt not bow down*

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to them, nor serve them ; it requires us to practise the contrary Duties in our Addresses to God. To *bow down to Him, and serve Him* ; that is, to worship him both with the Worship of our *Bodies* and *Minds* : Therefore, as he that either *bowes*, or *kneels*, or uses *any Posture of Reverence* to a *graven Image*, breaks the Second Commandment ; so does he, who, on Occasion of *Publick Worship*, either *refuses*, or *neglects* to use some such *Posture* to God. It being a *Contempt of God*, and contrary to *His Commands*, to *Pray* to Him ; for Instance, without some Posture of *Adoration* to Him, when we can do it, as well as it is a Sin to *kneel* to an *Image*, without *Praying* to it, which the *Papists* pretend to do ; the one is *Idolatry*, and the other *Sacrilege* : For the Reason why we are not to *bow down* to an *Idol*, is, because 'tis an *Act of Worship* due to God. And whether we give what is due to Him to an *Image*, or refuse to pay it to *Himself*, we are equally *Robbers of God*, we deny Him



Him his *Honour*, and are guilty of *Sacrilege*.

I wish all concern'd, may seriously consider, and amend their Practice in this Particular.

III. But the Practice of *Holy Men*, and of the *Church of God* in Scripture, are the best Interpreters of *God's Commands*; and from them we may learn what he requires, or approves in his *Worship*. Now through the whole *Old Testament*, we shall never find any one *sitting* at his *Devotions*; but on all Occasions of *Worship*, especially in *Publick Assemblies*, the *People of God* stood, kneeled, bowed, or prostrated themselves. 'Tis said, indeed, 2 *Sam.* vii. 8. that *King David then went, and sate before the Lord*: But here the *Original Word* is capable of another Signification, and may as well be translated, that he *remained, stayed, or abode before the Lord*; and accordingly it is thus translated in other Places of Scripture, particularly *Gen.* xxii. 5. and xxiv. 55. and xxix. 19. 1 *Kings* xii. 2. This Place, therefore, is no Exception against

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gainst that Practice, which is so evident through the whole *Old Testament*, that *Holy Men* worshipp'd God with their *Bodies*, as well as with their *Minds*.

IV. We shall find the same practis'd by our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, in the *New Testament*. Our *Saviour* undoubtedly is the *Best Example*, we can propose to our selves for the *Worship of God*, and we ought to imitate what he did, and approv'd. Now if we consider the *Worship* he offer'd to his Father, we shall find him addressing himself to him with *Bowing the Body*, with *Kneeling* and *Prostration*, as well as with *strong Cries* and *Tears*; so *Mat. xxvi. 39. And he went a little further, and fell on his Face, and prayed, O my Father, &c.* and *Luke xxii. 41. He kneeled down, and pray'd.* And as he paid this *Bodily Worship* to God, so he accepted the same from Men when he was on Earth: Thus the *Wise Men* worshipp'd him in his *Cradle*, *Mat. ii. 11. When they saw the young Child, and his Mother Mary, they fell*

*fell down, &c.* Thus they that desir'd to be Cur'd by him, address'd themselves to him, *Mark v. 22. When he saw him, he fell at his Feet, and besought, &c.* And after the same Manner, those who were Cur'd by him, return'd him Thanks, *Luke xvii. 16.* Thus his beloved *Mary* came into his Presence, *John xi. 32.* And *Mat. xxviii. 9. They held him by the Feet, and worshipp'd him.* Our Saviour look'd on this Bodily Worship to be so indispensably his Due, that he accepted of it from the very Devils, and they durst not forbear to pay it to him, *Mark iii. 11. And unclean Spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cry'd, Thou art the Son of God.* And thus the very Heathen, as well as his Disciples, approach'd him, even whilst he was in his State of Humiliation.

And that we may not be tempted to think, that Our Saviour admitted this *Bodily Worship* to be paid Him only, whilst he was *Bodily* present, we may observe *St. Stephen* presents his *Prayer* with the same Posture, *Acts*

vii. 60. *He kneeled down, and cry'd with a loud Voice, Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge.*

V. The Scriptures represent to us the First Christians thus *glorifying God with their Bodies*, (as St. Paul expressly commands us, 1 Cor. vi. 20.) in the *Publick Assemblies*, as we may learn from 1 Cor. xvi. 23. where the *Apostle* speaking of a *Heathen* coming into the Assembly of *Christians*, and being convinc'd, adds, *and so falling down on his Face, he will worship God.* If it had not been the Custom for Christians to do thus, it would never have been expected from a Heathen, or reckon'd an Argument of his Conviction. If the Church Triumphant in Heav'n may be allow'd a fit Pattern to us, of what is decent in the *Worship* of God, we find them paying this *Bodily Worship* to God, Rev. vii. 11. *And all the Angels stood about the Throne, and about the Elders, and about the Beasts, and fell on their Faces before the Throne, and worshipped God; so* Chap. iv. 10. and xix. 4. And the

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same we find practis'd by the Church on Earth, *Acts. xxi. 5.* where St. Paul, and the Church of Tyre, *kneeled down on the Shoar, and prayed.* After the same manner he took his leave of the Elders of Ephesus *Acts. xx. 36.* *He kneeled down, and pray'd with them all.* So constantly are *Bodily Worship* and *Prayer* join'd together, that *Bowing the Knee*, sometimes signifies *Prayer*, *Eph. iii. 14.* *For this cause I bow my Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Shrist.*

VI. The Scriptures represent this *Bodily Worship*, as the most proper External Act of Adoration: If we look into the Scriptures, we shall not find, *Praying, Praising, Reading the Scriptures, or Administring the Sacraments*, termed *Worship*; they are, indeed, *Duties*, which we are oblig'd to perform to the Honour of God; but not immediate direct Acts of *Worship*, properly so call'd: For *Worship* is properly the Subjection of our Minds to God; and that is a proper Act of *External Worship*, which directly signifies this Subjection or Submission of our

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our Minds: But *Prayer* signifies our Desires of good Things from *God*, and only indirectly our Subjection to Him; *Praises*, immediately signify the Sense we have of *God's Excellencies*, and only by consequence our Submission; *Reading the Scriptures*, is a Means of *Instruction*, and tends to bring us to submit to *God*; but does not directly express it. And the *Sacraments*, primarily signify *God's Grace* to us, rather than our Submission to Him. All these may, in a large Sense, upon very good Grounds, be looked upon as Parts of *Worship*, because they do imply such Submission; but *Bending* or *Bowing the Body*, is that, which is properly in Scripture called *Worship*, as signifying immediately and naturally, the *Bending* and *Submission* of our Souls, and nothing else.

In the *Old Testament*, the Words rendered *Worship*, signify properly and originally to *bow down*, or *prostrate the Body*. This is the proper Signification of כָּנָע and of שָׁחָה, the latter of which in the *Second Commandment* is

render'd to *bow down*; and very often, when the Original has, *they bow'd down themselves*; the Translators render it, *they worshipped*; so *Psal. xcv. 5.* and *Jer. i. 16.* *And worshipped the Work of their own Hands*; in the Original 'tis, *They bow'd themselves down to the Work, &c. Gen. xxiv. 52.* He *worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the Earth*; the Original has no more, but, he *bow'd himself to the Earth to the Lord*; so *Psal. xcv. 5.* And the same holds generally through the whole *Old Testament*; from whence it follows, that in the Opinion of our Translators, to *bow* one's self to the *Earth*, is that proper Act which they call *Worship*. And hence the whole *Worship of God* is signify'd by *Bowing before him*; *Micah vi. 6.* *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the High God?* that is, *How shall I Worship him acceptably?*

As to the *New Testament*, the Word generally there render'd *Worship* properly signifies a *Bodily Action*. *Περί κωνέω*, is Originally, to pay Ho-  
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mage by a *Kiss*; as we now kiss the King's Hand, which usually was done *Kneeling*: And hence *Kneeling* and *Worshipping*, signify the same thing in the *New Testament*, and the one is put for the other: Thus *Mat. viii. 2. There came a Leper, and worshipped him.* The same Person is said (*Mark i. 40.*) to come *beseeking him, and kneeling to him.* Of the *Canaanitish Women 'tis, said (Mat. xv. 23.) That she came, and Worshipped him.* And *Mark says (Chap. vii. 25.) She came, and fell at his Feet.* And *Luke says of the Man among the Tombs, that He fell down before him, (Chap. viii. 28.) Mark, that He worshipped him, (Chap. v. 6.) Of Jairus, Mark and Luke say, that He fell down at his Feet: Matthew, that He worshipped him, (Luke viii. 40. Mark v. 22. Mat. ix. 18.)* so promiscuously do the Evangelists use the Words *Kneeling*, or *Falling down*, and *Worshipping*, to signify the same Thing. Whence we may learn, that when any is said to *Worship Christ* visibly, by it is meant they *kneeled to him.*



*him.* And when we are commanded to Worship God in the Congregation, the Meaning is, that we are requir'd to express the Submission of our Minds, by *Bowing our selves*, or *Kneeling unto him*. Hence the very Soldiers, that in derision *bowed their Knees* to Christ, are said to *worship him*, Mark xv. 19. And St. *John*, Rev. xxii. 8. when he would Worship the Angel, *fell before his Feet*: To which the Angel reply'd, *See thou do it not ——— Worship God*. From which Text it clearly follows, that *Falling down* is an Act of Worship, and that we are commanded by the Mouth of an Angel to pay it to God.

VII. We find in Scripture, some Act of this *Bodily Worship*, accompanying every Religious Performance. Thus Prayers are generally offer'd with Kneeling, and that so constantly (as is observ'd before) that to *Bow the Knee*, in Scripture Language, is to *Pray*. Thus Praises, Thanksgivings, and Confessions of Faith, are offer'd *standing*, 1 *King*. viii. 14. *And the King*  
turn'd

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*turn'd his Face about, and blessed all the Congregation of Israel (and all the Congregation of Israel stood) and he said, Blessed be the Lord, &c. The same Posture is observ'd, ver. 55. 2 Chron. xx. 19. And the Levites---stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud Voice, 2 Chron. xxix. 26. Nehem. x. 40. And this was not a voluntary Act, but impos'd on the People, as appears from Nehem. xi. 5. Then the Levites---said, Stand up, and bless the Lord your God, &c. In conformity to which, the Saints and Angels in Heaven are represented to us thus praising God, Rev. vii. 9. They stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb---and cry'd with a loud Voice, saying, Salvation, &c. Reading the Holy Scriptures, both Reader and People us'd the same Posture, as appears from Nehem. viii. 4, 5. And Ezra the Scribe stood on a Pulpit of Wood--- And Ezra open'd the Book, and all the People stood up. And Chap. ix. 3. And they stood up in their place, and read in the Book: Which Our Saviour likewise observ'd, Luke iv. 16.*

*Lastly, They offer'd their Sacrifices with Bodily Adoration, 2 Chron. xxix. 27. And when the Burnt-Offerings began, the Song of the Lord began also— And all the Congregation worshipped, and the Singers Sang, and the Trumpets sounded; and all this continu'd until the Burnt-Offering was finish'd. The Word, as was observ'd, here render'd worshipped, signifies literally, they bow'd themselves down; and the Meaning is, They continu'd prostrate, or kneeling, whilst the Burnt-Offering was offered. Thus in every Religious Performance, the Scripture has taken particular Notice, and recorded to us, with what Acts of Bodily Worship it was offer'd up to God.*

## S E C T. II.

*The Practice of Our Church in Bodily Worship.*

**L**ET us, in the next Place, compare *our own Practice* with this Representation, and see how we perform this Part of *Visible Worship* in our Church.

*I. First,*

1. *First* then, When we come into the Publick Assemblies, we believe our selves to come into Christ's Presence; because he has promis'd, *Mat. xviii. 21. Where two or three are gather'd together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them:* And, therefore, in Obedience to the Commands of God in Scripture, 'tis our Custom to lift up our Hearts to Him in Prayer, and bow our Bodies before him: This *Bowing* our Bodies, when we come into the Assembly of Christians met together in Christ's Name, and for his Service, tho' it be not enjoyn'd by any Constitution of our Church, is generally practis'd by good People, as very decent in it self, and Edifying to others. Our *Bowing* our Bodies, therefore, at our Coming into a Christian Assembly for Worship, is only to pay that *Bodily Worship* to God, that He requires from us when we come into his peculiar Presence, which Presence he has promis'd in such Assemblies. Some, indeed, are so weak as to term our thus *Worship-*



*ping God, a Bowing to the Altar*; whereas our Church expressly declaring against any *Adoration* to be paid to the Consecrated *Bread* and *Wine*, does much more declare against doing it to the *Altar*.

II. *Uncovering the Head* is a Mark of Respect amongst us; and, therefore, we continue Uncover'd whilst the Assembly lasts; that is, whilst we are in Christ's Presence. The Custom of the *Eastern Church* was to *Uncover their Feet* in the Presence of God; so *Moses* and *Joshua* were commanded to do; (to which *Solomon* alludes, *Eccles. v. 1.*) This was easily practis'd with them, because they wore nothing on their Feet but *loose Shoes* and *Sandals*, which were ready slip'd off: And this continu'd 'till our Saviour's time, as appears by their Washing their Feet when they came into Houses, *Luke vii. 44.* *Uncovering the Head* is the same common Mark of Respect with us now, as *Uncovering the Feet* was with them in their Time: And this *Uncovering the Feet* being neither  
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practicable with us; nor any Note of Respect among us, but rather the contrary, Our Church has requir'd us, instead of it, to *uncover our Heads*, Can. 7.

For the Justification of this Practice, give me Leave to digress so far, as to explain one Passage in the New Testament, which seems to require, that a Man should have his *Head uncover'd* in the Presence of God, not as a Note of Respect, but of Privilege, 1 Cor. xi. 7. *For a Man indeed ought not to cover his Head, forasmuch as he is the Image and Glory of God; but the Woman is the Glory of the Man.* Which Passage does not primarily relate to the Covering the Head, but the Face, by a Veil, according to the Custom of the Eastern Countries: And this *Covering the Face* was a Note of Respect, as the contrary was a Note of Privilege: So we find, that when Rebecca was to appear before her Husband, Gen. xxiv. 65. *She took a Veil, and cover'd her self.* So Exod. iii. 6. *Moses hid his Face, for he was afraid.*

*afraid to look upon God; and Elijah wrapped his Face in his Mantle when he went out to meet God, 1 Kings xix. 13. On the same Account the Seraphims cover their Faces with their Wings, Isa. vi. 2. 'Tis, therefore, a peculiar Privilege and Favour to be allow'd to appear before God, uncover'd, and 'tis reckon'd as such, 2 Cor. ii. 18. But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, &c. Those that were out of Favour, might not appear bare-faced before their Prince, but with their Heads cover'd, as Haman was, when the King signify'd his Displeasure against him, Esther vii. 8. Now for the understanding of the before-cited Place, we must consider, that Man being the Image and Glory of God, is allow'd to take this Confidence before God, which is deny'd to Women: For since God was pleas'd to make Man his Image and Glory, 'tis not fit that this his Glory should be cover'd before Him; but on the other Hand, 'tis fit that Man's Glory, which is Woman, should be cover'd before God. This, I conceive,*

ceive, is the full Meaning of this Place, and has no Relation to the Manner of *Uncovering the Head*, in Use with us now; which is only a Mark of civil Respect, and that peculiar to Men, and not to Women. But however, being an Honour paid to *Men*, there's no Reason why it should not be paid to *God*: On the contrary, it seems to be requir'd by the Apostle's general Injunction, *Let all things be done decently*. And it is one of the Articles of Our Church, *That the Church has Power to order Rites and Ceremonies*; that is, to determine what particular Things come under the Apostle's General Word of *Decency*.

3. We stand up at our *Praises, Thanksgivings, and Confessions of Faith*, in Conformity to the Examples of Holy Scripture.

4. At our Confessions of Sin, and at our Prayers, we present our selves before God on our Knees, by Order of our Church, according to the Example of Our *Saviour*, and the Church of God.

III. We



III. We Celebrate the Holy Sacrament of the *Body* and *Blood* of Christ in a *Worshipping* Posture. I know that many except against this. It would engage me in a longer Discourse to examine it fully; perhaps, God may hereafter, give me an Opportunity to discuss it at large; at-present I shall only hint at the Scripture-Ground we have for it, and that by the following Deduction.

1. The *Altar* was of Old the *Lord's Table*, from whence his Attendants were fed, *Mal. i. 7. Ye offer polluted Bread upon mine Altar, and ye say Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The Table of the Lord is contemptible.*

The Author's Intention is not to assert, That the Scriptures require *Kneeling* at the *Lord's Supper*; but to shew, That it is not contrary to the *Institution* of Christ, or *Practice* of the Apostles, who compare Our Receiving it with the *Jews Partaking* of their *Altar*, to which they approached with *Adoration*.

2. On this Account the *Israelites* came to the *Altar*, and worship'd before

fore it, as being *God's Table*, on which the Sacrifice was presented as his Meat, of which they were permitted to partake: So *2 Chron. vi. 12. And he stood before the Altar of the Lord.* ver. 13. *And kneeled down on his Knees.* Nor can it be said, that this Kneeling of *Solomon*, was only because he offer'd up a Prayer at that Time, and that, therefore, he was in a Praying Posture; for, undoubtedly, it was the Duty of all that were present at any Sacrifice, to offer up Prayers to God with the Sacrifice. And accordingly we find it commanded, *2 Kings xviii. 22. Ye shall worship before this Altar in Jerusalem;* literally, *Ye shall bow down your selves.*

3. The *Communion Table* is call'd *The Lord's Table*, *1 Cor. x. 21.*

4. The *Israelites* Partaking of the *Altar*, is propos'd as an Example for our Partaking of the *Lord's Table*, *1 Cor. x. 16. The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood*

*Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, it is not the Communion of the Body of Christ? — ver. 18. Behold Israel after the Flesh: Are not they which eat of the Sacrifices, Partakers of the Altar?*

5. In Allusion to this Religious Eating with *Bodily Worship*, it is prophesied of Our Saviour, *Psal. xxii. 29. All they that be fat upon Earth,* (that is, the favour'd and happy Servants of God here, call'd in *ver. 20. The Meek*) *shall Eat and Worship.*

Since then, the Scripture sets forth to us a Religious Eating at the *Lord's Table* with *Worship*, and the *Holy Communion* is such an Eating at his *Table*, it follows, that the Scripture warrants our *Worshipping* when we Eat.

2. We are Commanded in Scripture to receive the Holy Eucharist *in Remembrance of Christ's Death; and by it we shew his Death 'till he com.* The same Scriptures command us to *Worship* our Saviour; *For he is the Lord, and Worship thou him, Psal. xlv. 11.* If ever then, we are to *Worship* our  
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Saviour, it is, certainly, when we come to Him in the Nearest Approaches, that we are capable of in this World, and with the highest Sense of Gratitude that our Souls can admit of; to remember, and adore him for the greatest Act of Love, that could be extended towards us, even Laying down his Life for us, and partake of the Benefits thereof by Feeding on him. If it be not our Duty to Worship Him with our Bodies, as well as our Minds, on this Occasion, it is hard to say when we are oblig'd to do it.

This Consideration prevail'd with the Protestant Church of *Poland*, to oblige all their Members to Receive *Kneeling* or *Standing*, in Opposition to the *Socinians*, who refus'd to pay any Worship to our Saviour, and therefore Celebrated his Supper *Sitting*. The Words of their General Synod are these, *Corpus Confession*. P. 236. *Quod attinet ad Ceremonias*, &c. "As to the Ceremonies of the *Lord's Supper*, the Decree sometime ago



“ ago discuss’d in the *Synod of Sando-*  
 “ *mir*, and the Conclusion made and  
 “ repeated in the General *Synod of Cra-*  
 “ *cow* and *Petrokow*, is all approv’d  
 “ in that Session of the *Synod of Ula-*  
 “ *dyslaw*, viz. This *Sitting* at the  
 “ Lord’s Table shall not be us’d in  
 “ any of the Churches of *Poland* or  
 “ *Lithuania*, &c. of our Communion :  
 “ For this Ceremony (tho’ indiffe-  
 “ rent as others are) is not us’d by  
 “ the *Christian* and *Reformed Churches*;  
 “ and is proper to the Infidel *Arians*  
 “ only, who place themselves in an  
 “ equal Throne with the Lord. Since  
 “ then, *Sitting* has crept into some  
 “ of our Churches, chiefly by the Oc-  
 “ casion and Countenance of those,  
 “ who have miserably fallen from us,  
 “ and *denyed the Lord that bought us*,  
 “ We entreat, and exhort all those  
 “ Congregations, and our Brethren  
 “ in the Lord, that they would  
 “ change *Sitting*, into the Ceremo-  
 “ nies used by us *Protestants* in all the  
 “ Reformed Churches of *Europe*, even  
 “ that the *Lord’s-Supper* may be ad-  
 “ minister’d

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“ minister'd to the Communicants  
“ *standing or kneeling* (with a Prote-  
“ station against *Bread-Worship* us'd  
“ by the *Papists*) both which Rites  
“ (as they have been hitherto us'd in  
“ some Churches) we leave free, and  
“ approve without blaming, or giv-  
“ ing Offence to those who use either.  
This Synod was held *June 19th, 1583.*

The Synod of *Petrokow* above-men-  
tion'd, (held *June 1, 2, 3, 1578. Pag.*  
*234.*) expresses it self in these Words,  
“ Because those Traiterous Fugitives  
“ from us to *Arianism*, who change  
“ all Things in the Church, pretend-  
“ ing to imitate Christ, without Dis-  
“ cretion, were the first Authors a-  
“ mongst us of *Sitting at the Lord's*  
“ *Table*, contrary to the Rites us'd in  
“ all the *Reformed Churches* through-  
“ out *Europe*: Therefore we reject  
“ this Ceremony, as proper to them  
“ who treat as well Christ as his Sa-  
“ craments irreverently, as indecent  
“ and irreligious, and very offensive  
“ to well-meaning People.

It ought to be observ'd, That this  
Church

Church reckons *Sitting* a Ceremony; and a Ceremony of an ill Signification and Original, and not used by any Protestant Church in their Time.

IV. But I find most People acknowledge the Reasonableness of this; and grant, if it were left to us how we would *Receive*, that we ought to do it with Adoration: But say they *Obedience is better than Sacrifice*; we are commanded to do what Christ did, and he instituted, and his Disciples receiv'd it, in a Table-posture; and therefore so ought we, notwithstanding the Scriptures, Reason, and Decency, seem to recommend another Posture to us.

Now to this Argument, which is the only one I find brought from Scripture, and which seems to prevail with most, I answer,

1. That we are not requir'd, nor is it convenient to imitate all that Christ did: Neither the Time, nor the Number of Receivers, nor the Posture being Obligatory to us; as appears, from *St. Paul*, 1. *Cor.* xi. 23.

who

who having occasion to mention *what he receiv'd of the Lord*, concerning this Sacrament, mentions only our Saviour's *taking Bread, giving Thanks, and Breaking it*; and then saying, *Take, Eat, this is my Body*, &c. without the Circumstances of the Number of Receivers, his Posture, or being at Supper. Nay, that we may not think, that this had any Relation to a Common Supper, or the Circumstances of it, he observes, that *Supper was done when he took the Cup*. Our Saviour's Posture, therefore, whatever it was, is no wise Obligatory to us, it not being any Part of what *St. Paul* professes to have receiv'd from Christ, concerning this Sacrament.

2. I have already prov'd, That Religious Eating was accompany'd with *Bodily Worship*; and therefore, if it were granted, that we were oblig'd to receive this Sacrament in a Table-Posture, from the Example of our Saviour; yet it would not follow, that we should not received it Kneeling. 'Tis certain, Our Saviour did  
not



not *Sit*, but *Lye* at Table, when he did eat his usual Meals. Suppose, then, he had obliged us to his Posture of Eating, we ought to *Lye*, as he did; but none assert the Necessity of our doing so, or practise this Way. Since then all Parties change it, sure we do better, that change it into the Religious Way of *Eating* recommended to us in the Scriptures, with Adoration, than others, that change our Saviour's Way into Sitting, the common Way of our Eating.

3. We have this further to say for our Practice, That Our Saviour was not at a Common Supper when he instituted this Sacrament, but at the Passover; which was a Sacramental Eating, and had a peculiar Posture prescribed for it, *Exod. xii. 11*. And tho some think (but without Warrant from Scripture) that the *Jews* did not observe this; yet 'tis owned they observed another, which differed from the Common Posture of Eating, and was reckoned Religious. However 'tis spoken, that Our Saviour per-

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performed this Eating with several Religious Ceremonies that were not in the first Institution: Such is that we find in *Luke xxii. 17.* *And he took the Cup, and gave Thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves.* This Cup is different from the Sacramental Cup, which is instituted, *ver. 20.* And, therefore, if we would imitate Christ, we ought to eat the *Lord's-Supper* in a Way peculiar to it self, and different from our Common Meals.

4. But, *Fourthly*, The full Answer to the Argument, is, That it goes on a false Supposition, That Our Saviour instituted this Sacrament in the Common Posture of Eating. Which no wise appears in Scripture; neither can it be inferred from any thing said or intimated by the Evangelists, or St. Paul, but rather the contrary. It's true, whilst the Disciples were Eating, *He took Bread*; but after that, *He gave thanks, and blessed it*; and then *He brake it, and gave it to them*: And it is not to be supposed, that the Disciples

Disciples continu'd Eating whilst Our Saviour was giving Thanks, and Blessing; that is, Praying. Our Saviour, or his Disciples, were not Eating, but giving Thanks, and Praying, whilst this Sacrament was instituted; and, therefore, it was proper to be done, (and in probability was done by our Saviour,) in a Thanksgiving, and Praying-posture. Neither was there any Necessity to take notice of this Change of Posture; since the Change of the Action, from *Eating* to *Thanksgiving* and *Blessing*, sufficiently signifies and infers it. There is no Notice taken of our Saviour's Rising at all from the Table, by any of the Three Evangelists, that deliver to us the Institution of the Sacraments; and yet it is plain, from *John* xiii. 4. that he did Rise from that Supper, *washed his Disciples Feet*, and *sate down* again, *ver. 12*. And so he might Rise to Bless and Distribute the Holy Sacrament: And therefore, we have no Assurance from Scripture, that *our Saviour instituted this Sacrament in a Common Table-posture*, rather

the *contrary* seems probable. So that He has left us at Liberty to follow the general Rules of Decency and Reason, and what the *Scriptures* represent to us as fit, and practis'd in the like Cases.

*Lastly*, We find the *Apostle* severely reproving the *Corinthians*, for their Irreverence in *Receiving* this *Sacrament*; and threatening them with *Damnation*, for not *Discerning the Lord's Body*; that is, for *Receiving* it as their *Common Food*, without distinguishing between them by a Reverend, and Religious *Receiving* it. And sure, it is but a due *Distinction* between *It* and our *Common Food*, to approach the *Lord's Table* with as much Reverence as the *Jews* did their *Altar*, at which they never sat down.

Upon the whole, I think we do nothing in this, or any other Sacred Action, as to *Bodily Worship*, but what is Warranted and Grounded on the *Holy Scriptures*; and particularly as to what we do at the *Holy Sacrament of*  
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*the Lord's-Supper*, it is as unjust to suspect, or accuse us of Worshipping *the Lord's Table*, or the Elements of *Bread and Wine*, because we receive them *kneeling*, as it were to accuse the *Jews* of Worshipping their *Altar* or *Sacrifice*, because they Worshipped *before* them, as God Commanded them to do, 2 *Kings* xviii. 22. I beseech God to give us true *Submission* and *Humility of Heart* ; for the Outward Expressions of these Inward Dispositions of *Mind*, which our Church has appointed by *Bodily Worship*, are, certainly, such as God has approv'd, and Holy Men have *practis'd* in Scripture.

## S E C T. III.

*The Practice of the Dissenters in Bodily Worship.*

I. **A**ND now I come to you, my *Friends*, who *Dissent* from Us to consider how You perform *this Part of God's Worship*, and to compare Your *Principles* and *Practices* with what I have represented from the *Holy Scriptures*. And

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And, *First*, As to your Principles. I need not tell you, That you do not allow *Bodily Adoration to be any Part of God's Worship*: Which you cannot but discern to be plainly contrary to the *Holy Scriptures*, that make it the *most proper* peculiar Act thereof (as I have shew'd before, *Chap. 4. Sect. 1. No. 1, 2, 3.*) In your *Confession of Faith*, *Chap. XXI.* Prayer, Reading Scriptures, &c. Singing Psalms, Administration of the Sacraments, are reckon'd up as Parts of Religious Worship, but not a Word concerning the Worship of the Body. Your *Directory* doth not only leave it out, but *excludes* it, by requiring All to enter the Assembly, and to take *their Seats and Places, without Adoration, or Bowing themselves towards one Place, or other*; that is, without Bowing themselves at all. A Rule directly opposite to Natural Reason, as well as to the Commands of God, and to the Examples of his Saints: And 'tis inconceivable, how it should be laid down by a Society of Men, that profess'd to believe Christ peculiarly present

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sent in their Assemblies ; which yet the Authors of your *Directory* profess to do, in that very Place where they forbid all Adoration. Let us then, I pray you, compare their Rule with God's Word : You have the Bible in your Hands, and you look upon it to be your Privilege to use it : The *Scriptures* say, *O come, let us Worship, let us bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* Your *Directory* says, *Let us enter the Assembly without Adoration or Bowing.* Where, notwithstanding it allows, that we in a *special Manner appear in God's Presence.* Surely, you cannot but see, this is not only to lay aside, but to contradict the Rules of *Scripture.*

II. Your *Practice* is conformable to your *Principles.* For,

1. At your *Thanksgivings* or *Praises*, you neither Bow, nor Stand up.

2. Whereas we, and the Churches of God in all Ages, have us'd to Stand up at the Solemn Confessions of Faith, you have cast out of your Religious Assemblies, not only *this Act of Worship,*

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ship, but the *Confessions of Faith* themselves; so material a Part of the Service of God, as appears from *Rom. x. 9, 10.* *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved: For with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.* To profess solemnly, that we expect no Happiness but from the good Pleasure of God, and that we freely acquiesce in his Provisions for us, is no small Evidence of the Submission of our Minds to God; and, upon that Account, may be reckon'd an Instance of External Worship, and accordingly many of the *Psalms* contain such Confessions.

3. You Sit generally at your *Publick Prayers.*

4. At the *Holy Sacrament* you Sit, not only whilst you Receive, but likewise at the *Thanksgiving* and *Blessing* before: And your *Directory* imposes this Posture on Communicants,

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tho' contrary to *Holy Scripture*, in respect of that Part that concerns the Prayer and Thanksgiving ; and without any *Command*, or so much as *Example* from Scripture, in respect of the Sitting at the Time of Receiving.

5. Too many of your Persuasion condemn us, who conform to God's Word, in these Particulars, as guilty of *Superstition* ; and endeavour to render our Conformity ridiculous ; not being content to lay aside the Commands of *God* themselves, but endeavouring likewise to *condemn* and *scoff* at the Observation of them in *Us*.

In short, I entreat you to consider, That you have *not any one Visible Act of Adoration among you in your Assemblies*, except we reckon in this Number, That your Men *Uncover their Heads* at Prayer ; and yet even this is not requir'd by your *Directory*.

III. And now let me a While examine calmly with you, the Pretences I have met with, for laying aside this Part of *God's* Worship ; for 'tis not probable, that any would banish *Adoration*

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ration out of their Assemblies, and alledge no Reason for their doing so.

1. *First* therefore, I find that Place of Scripture produc'd to this Purpose, *John iv. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit, and in Truth.* Some think, that all *Bodily Worship* is here forbidden, and that only the *Worship* of the *Spirit*, or *Mind*, is requir'd of us under the Gospel: Upon this, Some have declar'd against all *Churches*, or separate Places for *Worship*; Others, against all *Bodily Worship*; Others, against all *Sacraments*; Others, against all *Vocal Prayers, Praises* and *Thanksgivings*: And even in the Apostle's Time, some were against all *Visible Assemblies*. And indeed, if we understand this Place as some do, That all *Bodily Worship* is excluded by it, and that it is sufficient to *worship* God in our *Spirits*, or *Minds* only, I do not see but all these are in the right; and those who pretend to be above Ordinances, and *worship God no where*, are most conformable to this Rule; and next to them,

the *silent Meetings* of the *Quakers*, without *Sacraments*, without *Vocal Prayers* or *Praises*, are the most *Spiritual Service*. For if *other Dissenters* think *Bodily Worship*, such as *Bowing, Kneeling, &c.* unlawful or unnecessary, because they are *Acts of the Body*, and unfit, on that Account, to be offer'd to God, who is a *Spirit*; why may not the *Quakers* omit the *Sacraments*, and the *Words of the Mouth*, which are *Outward Things*, as well as the other? Nay, why should not *Outward Teaching*, or *Preaching* cease? since the *Spirit* is a sufficient Teacher, and has promis'd us, *Heb. 8. 10. I will put my Laws in their Minds, and write them in their Hearts*—*Ver. 11. And they shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, &c.* The Principle and Reasoning is the same in all these, and will justify the *silent Meetings* of the *Quakers*; nay, the Extravagance of *Those* that pretend to be above all *Ordinances*, as well as the Irreverence of *other Dissenters*.

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But we ought to interpret Scripture so as *one Place* may not contradict *another* ; and since the *Holy Scriptures* shew us, that *God* requires our *Vocal Prayers* and *Praises*, our *Visible Sacraments* and *Adoration*, we ought not to interpret *Worshipping in the Spirit* so as to exclude these ; but rather conclude, that they may be offer'd up to *God* in such a Manner, as to become proper for *Spiritual Worship*, or *God* would never have requir'd them.

When, therefore, our Saviour represents the *Worship* He taught the *World*, as a *Worship in Spirit and Truth* ; his Meaning, doubtless, is not to exempt us from *Worshipping his Father* with our *Bodies*, whereof He Himself has given us an Example ; but to teach us, That the *Outward Acts of Worship* that we pay to *God*, are only acceptable to Him, when they proceed from, and are accompany'd with a hearty *Submission of our Souls* ; and that every Act is more or less Acceptable, as it has more or less of our



Hearts and Affections in it : But that Circumstances of Place, and the like, give us no Advantage, and are of no Value towards making our *Worship* Acceptable.

This Meaning of the Words directly answers our *Saviour's* Design, which was to shew the *Samaritan* Woman, that the Time was coming, that the *Worship* offer'd to God under the *Gospel* would be nothing more acceptable, for being offer'd at *Jerusalem*, or Mount *Gerizim*, or any other Place : But the Heart being right, all Places were alike. Which was directly contrary to the *Jewish* Law, that allow'd no *Sacrifice* or *Oblation* to be acceptable to God, that was not offer'd at the *Temple* ; and consequently, their *Worship* deriv'd its Acceptance from the Place, and not from the Heart alone of him that offer'd it.

We affirm, therefore, as our *Saviour* has here taught us, That 'tis only from the *Heart*, or *Spirit*, that our *Worship* becomes acceptable to God, and that the Time or Place, where 'tis offer'd

fer'd, contributes nothing to our Acceptance : But that in whatever Place, at whatever Time, in whatsoever Posture, we offer up our *Spirits* and *Hearts* to *God*, we are accepted by Him.

But then we say likewise, a Man, who neglects the Assemblies of Christians, cannot have a good *Heart* towards *God*, because he breaks his Command ; That such as do not take Care to provide a convenient and decent Place, and set it a-part for Christians to meet, and to perform *God's* *Worship* in, cannot have a Value for it ; That such as neglect the *Holy Sacraments*, want *Faith* in His Promises, as well as *Obedience* to His Commands ; and that those who neglect to *worship* Him with their *Body*, and to pay *Outward Reverence* and *Adoration* when they come into his *Presence*, must want *Inward Submission* of their Minds, because they do not approach as he requires. If a Man truly *worship* *God* in his *Spirit*, it will oblige him, if able, to perform these Outward Acts,  
and

and if he be not able, *God* doth not require them.

It is in this, as in Faith, *Jam. ii. 18.* *A Man may say, Thou hast Faith, and I have Works: Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will shew thee my Faith by my Works.* After the same Manner a Man may say, Thou worshippingest *God* Inwardly in *Heart* and *Spirit*, and I worship him Outwardly, and in the Face of the Church with my *Body*: Shew me thy Inward *Worship* without *Bowing, Kneeling*, or other *Bodily Act of Worship*; and I will shew thee my Inward *Worship*, and Dread of *God's Majesty*, by the *Worship* of my *Body*.

From all which 'tis manifest, That our *Obligation to worship God in Spirit and Truth*, doth no more exclude *Bodily Worship*, than *Faith* does exclude *Works*.

2. The second Pretence I have heard for banishing of *Bodily Adoration*, is much like the first. It is alledg'd, That *God has no Value for it*; and that if our *Hearts are humble, and right* with

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*with God, no Matter whether we signify it by Outward Acts of Adoration, or no.*

But to this I Answer,

1. That God Himself is the best Judge of what befits his Majesty ; and tis a sure Sign that He values a Thing when He requires it : Since, therefore, He has Commanded us to render Him this *Bodily Worship* ; for us to alledge, *That He does not value it*, is too like setting up our own Wisdom above His.

2. The Words of our *Prayers*, or *Praises*, and all the *Fruits of our Lips*, are Outward Things, as well as the Gestures of our *Bodies* ; and God values them as little as our Prostrating our *Bodies* before Him, when the *Heart* goes not along with them, as appears from *Isa. i.* where he shews his *Abhorrence*, not only of *Sacrifices*, *Feasts*, and *Spreading forth Hands*, but likewise of *Prayers*, *ver. 4.* And *Mark. vii. 6, 7.* *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me : Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, &c.* Yet to throw *Vocal Prayers*



*Prayers and Praises* out of the Service of God, were absolutely to destroy His *Visible Worship* ; and after the same Manner to throw out all Outward Signs of Reverence, such as *Kneeling*, &c. is a fair Step to it. For the same God that has sworn, *That every Tongue shall confess unto him*, has likewise sworn, *That every Knee shall bow unto him*, Rom. xiv. 11. Both, therefore, are alike requir'd in the *Worship* of God, and both alike insignificant when separated from the sincere Concurrence of our *Hearts*. When the *Meditations* of our *Hearts* go along with the Words of our Mouths, they are acceptable to God ; and when the *Submission* of our *Souls* go along with the *Worship* of our *Bodies*, it is grateful to Him, and valuable in his Sight, as all other Acts of *Obedience* are.

3. Tho' *Bodily Worship* in it self were a small Thing, yet the Omission of it may be a great and crying Sin, and a great Contempt of *Almighty God*. Thus Eating the *Forbidden Fruit*

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*Fruit* was in it self, a very inconsiderable *Outward Action*; and yet being *forbidden*, it was the *Ruin* of all *Mankind*. Thus the *Washing* a Man with *Water*, *In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, is in it self no great matter; yet the *wilful Omission* of it is acknowledg'd by *most* to be *damnable*. Thus *Kneeling*, or *Standing* at our *Prayers*, is but a *Circumstance*; yet since God has requir'd it, and *Holy Men* recommended it by their Example, to omit it wilfully may be a great *Sin*, and render our best-meant *Prayers* ineffectual. Much more must it be sinful to condemn, or mock at those who practise it according to God's Institution.

4. As small a Value as you think God has for *Outward Performances*; yet it is plain, that you lay great *Weight* upon the doing, or not doing of them. In Cases of *Necessity*, we think they may be lawfully omitted; but you are taught, That in no Cases they may be lawfully practis'd. You are taught rather to stay at Home,

Home, and not to *worship* God at all *Publickly*, than to Conform in Outward Gestures, or Circumstances. You are advis'd rather to abstain all your Lives from the *Lord's-Supper*, than receive it *Kneeling*. Now if you think God does hate them so much, upon Supposition that He has not requir'd them, and accounts them a Pulluting of his Ordinance ; How must it displease Him to omit them, if it appears that He has Commanded them ? as I think, I have made sufficiently plain.

5. I intreat you, my Friends, to consider, That whatever *Bodily Worship* be in it self, yet to throw it out of our *Publick Assemblies* is of fatal Consequence, since it does in a great Measure defeat the Design of them. The great Design of *Publick Worship*, is, *First*, To signify, and testify to the World, the Sense and Belief we have of the *Being, Power and Providence of God*, to declare his Name to our *Brethren*, and in the *Midst of the Church* to sing Praises unto him, *Heb. ii. 12.* And,

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*Secondly*, To be a Means to beget, stir up, and preserve this Sense and Belief in one another, *Heb. x. 25.* To both these Ends, *Bodily* and *External Worship* do very much contribute; and 'tis hardly possible to attain either of them without it. For we cannot see into one another's *Hearts*, and, therefore, we must signify our Sense and Belief of God in the *Publick Assemblies*, either by *Words* or *Actions*, and, if possible, by such as are peculiarly appointed by God to this Purpose. But in your *Meetings* there is no Obligation on any one to signify his Concurrence with the Congregation in any Ordinary Act of *Worship*, either by Word or Gesture; and, therefore, this End of *Publick Assemblies* is utterly defeated by you. Your *Directory* does not require, or allow the People so much as to signify their Assent, by adding an *Amen* to the *Prayers* or *Thanksgivings* there offer'd: But, on the contrary, you ridicule those that practise it, pursuant to the Directions and Examples in Scripture.

And



And as to Gestures, such as *Kneeling*, *Standing*, or *Bowing the Body*, &c. you condemn them all as Reliques of *Idolatry*, or *Superstition*. There remains therefore, in your *Assemblies*, nothing whereby the People may testify their Belief, or Assent to what they hear, which was one Design of the *Meeting*. Thus by turning all *Bodily Worship* out of your *Assemblies*, you have made void this great End of them, and left no visible Distinction, whereby any one may signify, whether he assents to the *Worship* that is offer'd, or dissents from it. The whole *Assembly* being to one another, meer *Spectators* and *Hearers*, not *Joint-Worshippers*.

As to the other End of *Publick Worship*, which is to keep alive, and stir up your Affections ; you cannot but own that the Omission of this *Outward Worship*, is a great hindrance to it. For it must needs be a great Check to *Devotion*, to see a Man come into the Presence of God in a *Christian Assembly*, with less Reverence, or Shew of Respect, than into the Presence of an ordinary

ordinary Superior; and behave himself less civilly there, than he would do in a *Court of Justice*. And let People pretend what they will, *that* can never be suitable *Worship* to *God*, which would be Rudeness to a *Judge*. And, therefore, the *Quakers*, act much more reasonably, who refuse to take off their *Hats*, or pay *Bodily Worship* to *Men*, than other *Dissenters*, who pay it to *Men*, and refuse it to *God*. For to do so, must naturally tend to distinguish the Awe and Sense, we ought to have of his Majesty, and the Belief of his peculiar Presence in our *Assemblies*; and it is much to be feared, that this proceeds too often from the want of such Awe.

6. To conclude, There is a Language of Gestures, rather more significant and moving than that of the Tongue: And he must have a peculiar Make of Mind, that is not more awaken'd and affected, by seeing a *whole Congregation on their Knees*, with their *Hands* and *Eyes* lift up to *Heaven*; than to see them Sitting or

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Leaning, whilst their Petitions are offering up to *God*. Words, therefore, and Gestures, being only different Parts of the Language, whereby we express and communicate our *Thoughts* and *Affections* to one another, and both being recommended to us by *Nature*, and commanded by *Scripture* to be us'd in the *Worship of God*, he who lays aside *Gestures*, does sin against the *Commandment of God*, as well as he that lays aside *Words*. I heartily wish you and all *Dissenters*, wou'd consider this: Which, if you did, I assure my self, you would perceive this to be a *Matter of some moment*, and neither condemn our *Bodily Adoration*, nor continue your own (what must I call) *Irreverence*.

3. But Thirdly, Some alledge, for their omitting this Part of *God's Worship*, That they do not condemn *Bodily Adoration*, in his Service; but that to *Stand up and Kneel in the Congregation*, is so troublesome to them, that they judge they are better omitted.

To which I Answer, That I verily believe, that these Persons do give the  
true

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true Reason of this Practice. For, as it has been shewn here, 'twas of old the Reason of the People's Neglecting *God's Service*, and Matter of their Complaint against it, That *it was a weariness*, Mal. i. 13. But sure 'tis no less a Sin, to lay aside the *Commandments of God* for our *Ease*, than to change them for the *Tradition of Men*. 'Tis an Effect of our Natural Corruption to desire to serve God with that which *costs us nothing*, and without trouble; and most are willing to save their *Pains*, as well as their *Money*, in His Service. But this is a certain Sign that they have little Heart and Affection to it: If they had, it would not seem a Trouble to them, to shew it, by all the *Outward Demonstrations* that the Scriptures recommend to us. A *devout Heart* bows the *Body*, bends the *Knees*, and lifts up the *Hands* in *Prayer*, without any trouble. And they have reason to suspect their *own Hearts*, that find these Demonstrations of Reverence to their *Creator* and *Redeemer*, Uneasie to them.

This



This very Pretence ought to shew you, That 'tis the Negligence and Dead-heartedness of *People* towards *God's Service*, that has banish'd these *Bodily Adorations* out of it. We think it no Disadvantage to our Church, that we are forc'd to acknowledge, That *your Way of Worship is much easier than ours*, to such as are present at it; it being much less Trouble to a Man that has no Value for *Religion*, to come into an Assembly, and there sit down, and lap his *Cloak* about him, without being oblig'd to any *Word* or *Gesture* that may disturb his *Sleep*, or *worldly Thoughts*, than to be under an *Obligation* every Moment to signify his *Attention* by some *Word* or *Gesture*, under the Penalty of being remarked by the *whole Congregation* for his Negligence and Irreverence; which is the Case in our Assemblies; and, 'tis to be fear'd is the *Reason* that some leave us, and go where they may be at Ease, and Negligent more securely.

4. I confess, in the fourth Place There are some that excuse themselves

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more handsomely, for not Kneeling at their Prayers, &c. Say they, *We want Conveniency, we have no Room to Kneel.*

To these we Answer, That where such a Thing is omitted out of *Necessity*, not *Negligence* or *Contempt*, we believe God will not impute it to them, neither do we accuse them for it.

But then, we cannot but observe, That this is not the general Reason of Omitting this Part of *God's Worship* among you. For,

1. *First*, It is not your Custom to Kneel in your Publick Worship, tho' you have *Conveniency*, as is manifest from the Practice in all your Meetings; in which I could never learn that any one Kneeled: On the contrary, you condemn Us who do.

2. When you want *Conveniency* for *Kneeling*, you might stand at your Prayers; which is a *Scripture-Posture* as well as *Kneeling*. You might bow your Bodies when you come into God's Presence; you might continue *Uncover'd* whilst in it: But you omit all these, as well as *Kneeling*; and thereby

by plainly shew, that your Neglect, in this Point, is an Effect of *Choice*, not *Necessity*.

3. If *Kneeling* at *Publick Prayers*, be a Duty, we are oblig'd to provide *Conveniency* for it; for it is certainly a Sin to suffer any Part of *God's Service* to be omitted for want of Care. It is as easie to provide *Conveniency* for *Kneeling*, as for *Sitting*, in *Publick Assemblies*: And if we consider how careful most People are, to provide Seats for their Ease, and how Negligent to make any Provision for *Kneeling*; 'Tis but too manifest a Sign (whatever is pretended) that they are much more zealous for their Ease, than for the Service of *God*.

But what *Conveniency* is it that Men desire? It is as easie for them to have as much *Conveniency* as *St. Paul*, and his Congregation had, when they *kneeled* on the *Shore*, *Acts xx*. If they had the *Devotion* of *St. Paul*, they would not fail to imitate his Example; *Be ye followers* (saith he) *of me, as I am of Christ*. *St. Paul* followed the Example

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Example of *Christ* in this Particular; and surely, we ought to follow his, except we think our selves grown Wiser than he was, or prefer our Ease to our Duty.

But the Truth of the Matter, as it seems to me, is, That your neglecting to Kneel at the *most solemn* of all Christian Ordinances, the *Lord's Supper*, does harden you against *Reverence* in the other Parts of *Divine Worship*. And 'tis no Wonder it shou'd do so; for if *Reverence* be not thought Necessary in that Duty, it may well seem Unnecessary in any other.

C H A P. V.

*Of the* LORD'S SUPPER.

S E C T. I.

*What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning the Frequency of Celebrating it.*

I. **T**HE *Fifth* Main and Substantial Part of the *Ordinary Worship* of God, in the *Assemblies of Christians*,



*stians*, is, *The Celebration of the Lord's Supper*. It is not to be expected, that I should treat concerning the Preparation requisite in the *Receivers*, or any of those other Circumstances, which are generally agreed on as necessary in this Matter, and concerning which so many excellent Treatises are extant; I shall confine my self to one Point, and that is the *Frequency* of it, as a *Publick Act of Worship*; and Examine, *First*, What the *Institution* and *Practice* of the *Church of God*, in Scripture, teach us, as to this Particular. *Secondly*, Compare our *Practice* therewith. And, *Thirdly*, The *Practice* of those who differ from us.

As to the *Frequency* of *Celebrating the Lord's Supper*, I find many People of Opinion, That the Scriptures have determin'd nothing in it; and that therefore, it is intirely left to the Discretion of the *Ministers*, how often they will Celebrate it; and to the People, how often they will Receive it: And that on this Account, every one is left to judge for himself, whe

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he will be a Partaker of it, as he thinks it most for his *Comfort and Edification*; which makes the *Celebration*, and *Receiving* it so *Arbitrary* a Thing, that many never *Receive* it all. And the Universal Neglect of it, is become one of the *Crying Sins of these Kingdoms*, and a great Objection against the *Reformation*.

But if we consider the *Institution* of this *Sacrament*, it will help us to give a right Judgment, as to the *Obligation* of the *Frequency* that lies on us. I shall endeavour to make this plain in the following Particulars.

I. Our *Saviour*, when he had *blessed*, *broken*, and *deliver'd* the Bread to his *Disciples*, Commanded them to *Take*, *Eat*, and *Do This*, that they saw Him *do*, in *Remembrance of Him*: And when he had *Blessed* the Cup, and given it to them, he Commanded them to *Drink* all of it, and *as often as they Drink it*, to *do* *in Remembrance of Him*, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Now I conceive, the most Natural Interpretation of these Words of our *Saviour*, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*,

and *This do Ye, as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of Me*, to be as if he had said, " We have now Celebrated together the *Jewish Passover*, in Remembrance of our Fore-Fathers Deliverance out of *Egypt* : But I am about to purchase for you, by my Death, a much more glorious Deliverance from the Slavery of *Sin*, and the Power of *Hell*. And I order you for the future to do this ( which you see done by Me ) in Remembrance of Me, as what you have hitherto done, has been in Remembrance of your Deliverance out of *Egypt*." From this *Institution* it appears,

1. That the *Lord's Supper* is substituted in the Place of the *Passover* which was Commanded by the Law to be Celebrated once in the Year and that, in a Place appointed by God, where all *Israel* were to Assemble for it.

2. That Our *Saviour* has confined us to no Place, or prefix'd Time for the Celebration of his *Supper* that

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ceeds it; which makes it much more easy for us to observe it, and renders us much more inexcusable if we neglect it.

3. Since Our *Saviour* has taken off the Confinement to Time and Place, that made the *Passover* such a Burthen; it follows, that they who Celebrate it seldomer than the *Jews* did their *Passover*, must needs have less Regard to the Memory of Christ's Death, and the Deliverance wrought by it, than the *Jews* had to their Deliverance out of *Egypt*: There being no other imaginable Reason, that can tempt them to neglect purifying themselves for this Solemnity of *Worship*, and Frequenting it, but the Deadness of their *Hearts* towards Christ, and the Want of *Sense*, *Gratitude*, and *Love* towards their Master.

4. Christ's Positive Command to *Do this in Remembrance of Him*, &c. must oblige us in *some* Times, and in *some* Circumstances: And there can be no better Way of Determining when we are oblig'd to do it, than



by observing when *God* in his Goodness gives us Opportunity ; for either we are then oblig'd to do it, or else we may chuse whether we will ever do it or no ; there being no better means of determining the *Frequency*, than this of *God's* giving us the Opportunity : And the same Rule holding in all other general positive Commands, such as in those that oblige us to *Charity*, we may be sure, it holds likewise in this. Therefore, whoever flights, or neglects any Opportunity of *Receiving* which *God* affords him, does sin as certainly, as he who being enabled by *God* to perform an Act of *Charity*, and invited by a fit Object, neglects to Relieve him, or shuts up his Bowels of Compassion against him, concerning whom the Scripture assures us, That *the Love of God dwells not in him* : And the Argument is rather stronger against him, who neglects this Holy Sacrament ; for how can it be suppos'd, that Man has a true love for his *Saviour*, or a due Sense of his *sufferings*, who refuses, or neglects to remember

member the greatest of all Benefits, in the easiest Manner, though Com-manded to do it by his *Redeemer*, and invited by a fair Opportunity of God's own Offering?

5. 'Tis manifest, That if it be not *our own Faults*, we may have an *Opportunity* every *Lord's Day* when we meet together; and, therefore, that Church is guilty of Laying aside this *Command*, whose *Order of Worship* does not require, and provide for this Practice: Christ's *Command* seems to lead us directly to it: For, *Do this in Remembrance of Me*, implies, that Christ was to leave them; that they were to meet together after he was gone; and that he requir'd them to remember him at their Meetings whilst he was absent. The very Design of our Public Meetings on the *Lord's Day*, and not on the *Jewish Sabbath*, is to remember, and keep up in our Minds, a Sense of what Christ did, and suffer'd for us, *'till he come again*; and this we are oblig'd to do, not in such a Manner as *our own Invention* suggests,

but by such Means as *Christ himself has prescrib'd to us*, that is, by Celebrating this *Holy Sacrament*.

It seems, then, probable, from the very *Institution* of this *Sacrament*, that Our *Saviour* design'd it should be a Part of *God's Service* in all the *Solemn Assemblies* of *Christians*, as the *Passover* was in the *Yearly Assemblies* of the *Jews*. To know, therefore, *how often* *Christ* requires us to Celebrate this *Feast*, we have no more to do, but to enquire *how often* *Christ* requires us to Meet together, that is, at least every *Lord's Day*.

II. And the same is farther manifest, in the Second Place, from the *Examples* of the *Apostles*, and of the *Churches of God* in the *New Testament*. They cannot be suppos'd, but to have understood what *Christ* meant by these Words, *Do this in Remembrance of Me*; and if it appears, that they did make this *Feast* a constant Part of their *Ordinary Worship* we may safely conclude, That *Christ* meant it should be so. And here  
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'tis observable, *That we do not find any solemn stated Meeting of Christians for Worship in the whole New Testament without it.*

At first the Disciples had their Meetings every Day, and then they likewise daily receiv'd this Sacrament, *Acts ii. 46. And they continu'd daily with one Accord in the Temple, and in Breaking Bread from House to House.* And St. Paul supposes, that their Meetings together was on Purpose, and with express Design to Celebrate this Feast, *1 Cor. x. 20. When ye come together, therefore, in one Place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper;* which intimates, that one main Design of their Coming together, was, and ought to have been, *to eat the Lord's-Supper;* though by their Misbehaviour they so corrupted the Ordinance, that it could not be call'd *His Supper.*

If one should now reprove Christians whom they observe to misbehave themselves in Church, in these Words; *When you come together into*



*one Place, That is not to hear the Word of God preached to you ; for one is Talking, and another is Sleeping : Wou'd not every Body conclude, That in the Opinion of the Reprover, the Hearing of the Word of God preached, ought to be one End of their coming together ? And then, surely, the Apostle's saying, That when you come together into one Place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper, &c. gives us Ground to conclude, That in his Opinion, Eating the Lord's Supper ought to be one constant End of our Coming together. Which is further manifest from the Advice he gives them, ver. 33. Wherefore, my Brethren, when ye come together to Eat, tarry one for another. One End, therefore, of their Coming together, was, as Children come together in a Family at Meal-Time, that is to be fed at their Father's Table : For what the Apostle call'd in the former Verse, Coming together into one Place, in this Verse he calls, Coming together to Eat ; intimating, that a main End of their Coming together into one Place, was to eat.*

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3. When the Meeting of Christians came to be fix'd to the *First Day of the Week*, or the *Lord's Day*, the *Breaking of Bread* was likewise brought to the same Day: So *Acts* xx. vii. *And upon the First Day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached unto them.* From which Words we may conclude two Things: *First*, That the *First Day of the Week* was the Disciples Time of Publick Worship: *Secondly*, That the *Breaking of Bread*, or *Celebrating the Holy Eucharist*, was a Part of that Worship. The *Scripture* is as plain for the one as the other.

There have been some Disputes rais'd about Changing the Day of Worship, from the Last to the First Day of the Week, and this Place is usually produc'd to justify the *Change*; and sure, the same Place is as clear for the Celebration of the *Lord's-Supper* on that Day, as for the *Observation* of the *Day it self*, instead of the *Sabbath*. And, therefore, whoever wilfully passes the *Lord's Day* without it, does not observe

observe it, as the Scriptures, from the Practice of the Disciples, direct us to do.

4. I have endeavour'd all along to confine my self to the plain Words of *Scripture*, and to use such Arguments only, as the meanest Persons might be able to judge of from their *Bibles*: Yet in a Controverted Place of *Scripture*, concerning the Meaning of a Command of Christ, relating to some positive Duty, I take the constant Practice of the Church from the Apostles downward, to be a good Means of determining the Sence of it: And as there is not any Example of a stated Assembly for Worship in the *New Testament*, without the *Lord's-Supper*, so I think there is not any Example of that Nature in all *Antiquity*. For the Truth of which, I appeal to those that are skill'd in it.

The nearer we come to the Apostles, we shall still find the *Lord's Supper*, the more punctually observed, as a constant part of the Ordinary Service

vice of the Church: And 'tis remarkable, that when first, some, who had been present at the Prayers and Preaching of the Church, began to go away from the *Publick Assemblies*, without *Receiving* (which was a Corruption that came in about Two Hundred Years after Christ,) it was look'd on so great an Innovation and Breach of the *Scripture-Rule*, That the Church Decreed, Whosoever was guilty of it, should be Excommunicated. So, particularly the Ninth of those, commonly call'd the *Canons of the Apostles*, and the Second Canon of the Council of Antioch.

Thus the Practice of the Church continued for many Ages. And tho' the Generality of Men could not be persuaded, constantly to partake of the *Lord's-Supper*, after the Discipline of the Church was dissolv'd, and the Piety of Men began to cool, yet still it was Celebrated on the *Lord's Day*, according to the first settled *Practice of the Church*.



5. And indeed, the corrupt Practice of the solitary Masses of the *Papists*, is a further *Evidence* of its being counted Originally a Part of the Ordinary Worship of God. I think 'tis confess'd by all, even by the *Papists* themselves, that those Masses had their Original from the Universal Corruption and Negligence of Christians; for whilst the People had either Piety or Zeal, they Communicated with the Bishop, or Ministers, in every *Assembly*, at least, a competent Number of them: But when Piety and Devotion were in a Manner lost in the corrupt Ages of the Church, it came to pass, that tho' the Minister Consecrated the Elements every *Lord's Day*, according to the Example of the Holy Scriptures, and Antiquity, yet he could prevail with few or none to Receive with him, but was often forc'd to Receive alone.

This was a great Corruption, and a Falling from the *Scripture-Precedent*; but the *Roman Church*, instead of Re-forming the Abuse, by obliging the People to Receive as formerly, corrupted

rupted her Principles as well as Practice, and Decreed it lawful and sufficient for the *Priest* to Receive alone. Yet this Abuse shews us what should be, and what has been the *Practice*; and that the *Church* has constantly reckon'd the *Lord's Supper*, as an Ordinary Part of *Publick Worship* in *Christian Assemblies* on Solemn Days; and sure then, to lay it aside, can be term'd no less than an *Invention* of our own; since we can neither in *Scripture*, or in the Church of God for Fourteen Hundred Years together (which is a sufficient Commentary on the *Scripture Text*) produce an Example of a stated Solemn *Christian Assembly* without it.

## S E C T. II.

*The Practice of our Church, as to Frequent Communions.*

I. **H**AVING thus consider'd the Rules and Examples, that the *Scriptures* afford us in this Point; let us, in the Second Place, compare the *Rules* and *Practice of Our Church*,  
with

with this Pattern. I will not pretend that they come fully up to it, this being the most defective Part of the *Reformation*; but I doubt not, on view, it will appear, that *Our Church*, comes nearer the Scripture-Precedent, than perhaps any other.

'Twas the Design of the *Reformation*, to throw out the Corruptions of the *Church of Rome*, and to bring Things back to what was practis'd in the *Apostles Time*, and in the purer Ages of the *Church*. And as to the present Point before us, *Our Reformers* found Two Corruptions crept in by Time; The *first* was, That the *Priest* Receiv'd the *Lord's-Supper* alone, without the People, which destroy'd the Nature of this *Holy Sacrament*, as a Communion: The *Second* was, That the People thought they had sufficiently observ'd the *Lord's-Day*, if they saw *Mass*, without Understanding it, or Receiving. *Our Church*, therefore, to *Reform* the First of these, *Ordains*, That there shall be no Communion except

cept Four (or Three at the least) communicate with the Priest. So where Three are willing to Receive, the Ministers may proceed to the *Holy Communion* every *Lord's-Day*. For our Saviour has promis'd, That *where Two or Three are met together, He will be in the midst of them.*

Three, therefore, make a Congregation, and have a Title to the Ordinances of *Christ*; and there is no Reason, that the Obstinacy or Negligence of others, should hinder such as are willing, from Worshipping *God*, according to his Institution; and, therefore, our *Church*, has taken Care to provide for them, by *Ordering* that some Part of the Communion-Service be read every *Lord's-day*; both with Design to put all the People in Mind of their Duty, and to accommodate such as can be prevail'd on herein, to live up to the Rules of Scripture, and the Practice of the Primitive Church.

2. 'Tis *Order'd*, That in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches and Colleges, where there are many Priests and  
Deacons,



*Deacons*, they shall all Receive the *Communion* every *Sunday* at least.

3. That every *Parishioner* shall Communicate at least Three Times in the Year, whereof *Easter* to be one ; and surely such as cannot fit themselves so often, must, in their own Opinion, be out of the State of Grace, and deserve to be Excommunicated by the *Church*.

4. *Lastly*, As to our Practice, we have prevail'd so far, that Universally the *Lord's Supper*, is Celebrated *Thrice*, every Year; and where either our Persuasions, Arguments, or Entreaties can prevail with our People, we have Monthly Communions ; and in Cities, and large Towns, by the changing the *Monthly Days*, in several Churches, People that are Devoutly dispos'd, have Opportunities of Receiving Weekly : And we have Reason to bless God that our Church wants not some, and I hope, I may say many, such.

5: Upon the whole, it must be confess'd, That to hold Solemn Assemblies of Christians without Communicating

nicating, is a Corruption of *Popery*, and came in by Dissolution of Manners, and Slackning of the Discipline of the Church; and tho' we have not been able to *Root-out* and *Reform* this *Popish Practice* entirely, yet we have done our *Endeavour*; and, by God's Blessing, may say, we have made some Progress in it; insomuch, That if we take that for *Ordinary* which has a constant fixed Time for its Observation, the *Holy Sacrament* is an *Ordinary Part* of our Publick Service of God.

And I verily persuade my self, That by God's Assistance, we should have brought our People before now to the Scripture-Order of constant Weekly Communicating, had not the ill Example and Obstinacy of those, that separate from Our *Church*, encourag'd them in their Negligence, and weaken'd our Discipline: For our *Church* orders *Non Communicants* to be Presented and Punished: And our Ministers do not generally flatter the People in their Sin, or dissemble their Duty in this Point; but frequently,  
and

and earnestly, by *Sermons Admonitions*, and *Treatises*, Purposely publish'd to this Intent, press them to it; and therefore we are blameless before God and Man. Nor is this our Fault, That the Practice of ou People is not Reform'd, according to the Pattern of the *Apostolick Church*, and the Rules of *our Own*: So that we cannot be accus'd of laying aside the *Commandments of God*, or teaching any Doctrin of *our own Invention*, in this Particular; tho' we are yet too far short of the *Primitive Practice and Institution*.

### S E C T. III.

*The Practice of the Dissenters about Frequency of Communicating.*

I. **I** Come now, (according to my former Method) to *You*, my Friends, who *Dissent from us*, and entreat *You*, to Examine, with *Me*, your Principles and Practice, by these Scripture-Rules and Examples: And here, *Firſt*, I must observe to you,

you, That you have no Fix'd or Set-Times, for the Administration of this Sacrament; on the contrary, your *Directory Orders*, *That the Times, how often this is to be Celebrated, may be consider'd, and determin'd by the Ministers, and other Church-Governors, of each Congregation, as they shall find most convenient for the Comfort and Edification of the People committed to their Charge: By which Rule, the Lord's Supper is Excluded from being any ordinary constant Part of God's Service, it being referr'd to the Discretion of the Ministers and Elders, of each Congregation, to determine, as in other occasional Things, how often the People shall have the Comfort of it. It had been as reasonable to refer it to their Discretion, how often the People should have the Comfort of Hearing the Scriptures read, of joyning in the Praises of God, or in Prayers to Him; which yet they determine they are oblig'd to every Lord's Day.* Had they made the same  
Rule



Rule for the Holy Communion, they had, indeed, conform'd to the Scripture-Precedent, and might have pretended to some Reformation: But to leave the Celebration of this Feast altogether Discretionary, I have shew'd to be directly against what we find practis'd in Scripture.

II. Whereas 'tis a Corruption of *Po-pery*, to suffer the *People* to be present at the Publick Assemblies for Worship, and Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, without being oblig'd to Receive; *your Teachers*, instead of endeavouring to Reform this *Abuse* and *Innovation*, have fallen into another Practice as unprecedented in *Scripture*, the Excluding this Sacrament entirely from your Ordinary *Solemn Meetings*. And truly, in this Point, you seem more inexcusable than the *Papists* themselves; for the *Papists* order the Elements to be Consecrated every *Lord's Day*, and distributed to those that desire it: But *your Teachers* neither offer it to the *People*, nor invite them to it; nay, so far are they from it,

it, that they do not so much as *afford an Opportunity* to those that desire to be constant Receivers: Which is plainly to multiply the Abuses introduc'd by *Popery*, instead of *Reforming* them.

III. They rarely press their *People* to *Communicate*: They have few *Sermons*, or *Discourses* to that Purpose; and many of them condemn our Zeal, for endeavouring to restore the *constant Communion* preceded in Scripture.

I must, further, make *you* sensible, That *your Practice* is yet worse than *your Principles*. Your *Directory* owns, that the *Communion*, or *Supper of the Lord*, is frequently to be Celebrated, &c. But it fares with this, as with all other indefinite Rules; they signify only, that *People* may do what they please in the Case. No Body can certainly tell, what *Frequently*, *Many*, *Often*, or *Convenient*, signify; and, therefore, where only these Words are us'd in a Rule, 'tis little better, than to have no Rule at all, as appears in this very Case: For, when  
*People*

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*People* were relaxed from the particular, and certain Rules of our Church, by the first Breaking off of those of *your Persuasion* from us, the *Lord's Supper* was laid aside wholly for several Years, by some *Congregations*; and, at last, too many came to look on it as a Matter of no constant-Necessity.

I appeal to *You*, whether 'tis not yet reckon'd a great thing among many of you, if once in a Year or two a Communion be celebrated in one of your Meetings: Nay, among some of you, it is often omitted for several Years together; and in some Places, for ten or more. I fear I may say, *Your People* generally have *too little Sense of the Obligation* of Receiving it at all; and *your Ministers* indulge them *so far* in this *Corruption*, that a Man may live *comfortably amongst you*, and with the *Reputation of a Professor*, to *Thirty* or *Forty* Years of Age, and never Receive at all: And by the best Enquiry I cou'd make, I cou'd not compute that *One in Ten* that go to *your Meetings* ever Receive, through the  
whole

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*whole Course of their Lives, notwithstanding Christ's positive Command to do it in Remembrance of Him. So unhappily are Men over-seen in Laying aside the Commands of God, for their own Inventions.*

I should be glad to find that I were mistaken in this *Computation*: In the mean time, you must give me Leave to tell you plainly, That this Practice of *Rare or No Communion*, is so peculiarly your Own, that I think you are altogether singular in it; and are so far from having any Precedent for it in Scripture, that I doubt whether any Precedent can be found for you, even amongst the most degenerated, or *Barbarous People* that ever call'd themselves *Christians*.

And, therefore, if you have either any true Regard for Scripture, or Reverence for the *Constant and Universal Practice* of the Church of God; you ought to reflect upon your Practice herein; and consider how you can answer it to God, or your Consciences.

I will not examine the *Reasons* com-

L

monly



monly given for *your* Omissions in this weighty Affair, since 'tis manifest, no *Reason* of *Man's Invention* ought to be admitted, for direct *Disobedience* to *Christ's Command*. If you are *Christians* in earnest, you ought, as often as you have *Opportunity*, to remember the great *Love* of our *Lord and Master*, as He has *Commanded*; and *your Ministers* ought to take *Care* to afford *you* frequently such *Opportunities*. If *you*, or *they*, neglect this, I do not see, how *you* can with *Reason*, insist so much on the *Purity* and *Observation* of *Christ's Institution*.

## CONCLUSION.

**I** Have gone through the *Five Principal* Parts of the *Publick Worship* of *God*; and (I hope) in all of them have made good what I first undertook; and shew'd, that there needs no more to justify the *Publick Service* of our Church, than to compare it with

with the *Rules* and *Examples* of *Scriptures*. I have only a few Words to add, by Way of CONCLUSION, first to my Brethren of the *Clergy*, and then to the *Laity*, who are under my Charge.

To the Conforming CLERGY of  
D E R R Y.

1. **A**ND, *First*, As to you, My Brethren, that are of Our Communion, and own My Authority, let me, as a Brother, and a Fellow-Labourer, Exhort you to be Thankful to God, that has intrusted you with such an Excellent Ministry and Service; which being built on so sure a Foundation as the Word of God, can never be shaken, or put you to any great Difficulty to Defend it; since you need no more than the plain Words of your Bibles, without Gloss or Commentators, to assert and justify it.

2. Let me recommend to you, Reverence, Devotion and Diligence, in the Use of this Service. I have al-

ready observ'd, That there is a Language of *Gestures*, rather more significant and affecting than that of *Words*. It becomes us, therefore, not only to Love and Use our *Service*, but likewise to recommend it to the *People*, by a distinct and affectionate Manner of Pronouncing and Reading it, and by a devout and grave Behaviour at it. This can never be press'd too much on you, or on others by you; since 'tis absolutely necessary to give *Life* and *Efficacy* to it; as the contrary will expose the *best* and *most sacred* Thing to *Contempt*, and bring a greater Disparagement on our *Service*, than all Our *Adversaries* Endeavours can ever do. Tho' Our *Service* be Appointed by God, and *Warranted* by *Scripture*; yet even God's *Appointments* are *Abomination* to him, when separated from the *Heart*, and are only acceptable to Him, as they contribute to *Inward Devotion*. Let me, therefore, entreat you to labour so to *perform* the *Service of Our Church*, that it may attain the End for which God has design'd *His Worship*.

3. Since

3. Since the *Service of our Church* is such as *God* has requir'd in *His Word*, let nothing discourage us in the Use of it : Let us remember, that we perform it in Obedience to *God*; and tho' some Hate, some Revile, and some Despise it, yet, that the *Author* of it is able to Vindicate it. This is no New Thing ; 'Tis the Entertainment the World has generally given *God's Service*, and his *Truths* : And, therefore neither Obstinacy, Perverseness, or Negligence of the People, whom you are to Persuade, ought to Discourage you. Be Diligent, be Constant, be Resolute, and be assur'd, that *God* will always give you Success, so far as is necessary to support his *Truth*. All Means are, therefore, to be attempted ; and when one fails, another is to be apply'd : And the more averse People seem to the Way of *Worship* prescrib'd by *God*, and the more eager they are for any Corruption, the more Industry is to be us'd to bring them off from it ; and when all other Means fail, earnest *Prayers* and *Intercessions*



with *God* still remain : We are never to Despair, whilst we have *God's Truth* on our Side, tho' whole *Provinces* should fall off from the Church ; as all *they in Asia* did from *St. Paul*, 2 *Tim.* i. 15. Tho' few, or none should believe our Report, as it happen'd to Our Saviour Himself ; yet *God* will have a Reward for the faithful Endeavours of his Ministers : And therefore, we must not desist, tho' People seem Obstinate ; but *in Season, and out of Season*, by Exhortation and Writing, by all Means of Importunity and Industry, we must press them to their Duty, and endeavour to bring them back to the Purity of *God's Worship*, as He has instituted it.

4. Let me put you in Mind, That the *Motives*, you had to do your Duty, are the most Noble and Generous, that can be : And you have this Advantage, that you cannot be suppos'd to be zealous in your Office, out of any private Interest, or prospect of particular Profit. Your Maintenance and Preferments, are ascertain'd

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certain'd to you by Law, and do not depend on the Voluntary Contribution of the People. And as you are under no Temptation to please them, by complying with their Vices or Humours; so neither can you be suspected to be Diligent and Industrious in your Office, out of any such mean Considerations. Since, therefore, what Pains you take, may well be suppos'd, to proceed only from Sense of Duty, and the Love of God, let me Intreat you to Labour in it.

It is certain, That neither Popularity, Factions, nor Worldly Interest, can Influence you to this, so as they may some, that have no other Way, to attain to Honour, or Support, but by making or gaining a Party. But God forbid, that true Piety or Zeal for Souls should work less effectually upon you, than those Carnal and Servile *Motives* do on other.

Let me, therefore, earnestly encourage, and intreat you, to it more and more, and that you will endeavour to *become all Things, to all Men*; and

decline none of those *Arts* which are allowable, when apply'd, to gain the People to *Truth* and *Holiness*; but very Wicked, when employ'd to Divide, and Seduce them.

5. Let me put you in Mind, That you are *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, and not of a *Party*: And therefore, it concerns you, to mind the Common Interest of *Holiness*, and *Religion*, more than those Differences, that are often of little Concern in themselves, and are insisted on only, as the Occasions and Badges of *those People*, who being resolv'd to separate themselves, are oblig'd to take up little Differences for a Distinction. The less you meddle with these Disputes, it is commonly the better: And, indeed, 'tis not prudent to mention them, 'till Men's Minds be fitted and prepar'd, by a true Sense of the great Duties of *Religion*: And then the best Way, perhaps, will be, to shew of what little Weight they are, to cause or justify Divisions, or Quarrels amongst Christians,

I am

I am well aware, that it may be objected to us, that whilst we press the great *Duties* of the *First* and *Second Table*, and spend our Pains and Diligence in Defending our *Common Christianity*, against *Papists*, *Socinians*, *Deists*, and *Atheists*, those that are our *Adversaries* in these lesser Points, have made their Advantage of Our being imploy'd against the *Common Enemy*, to undermine us, with the People; nay, that some of them have been join'd with those *Enemies*, to pull down *Our Constitution*. But yet I persuade my self, that we are in less hazard from them, whilst we do our Duty, and apply our selves to the Great and Common Obligations of *Our Holy Religion*, than if we should leave *this* expos'd to the Assaults of *Our common Enemy*, to Guard our selves from the Attempts of such *back-Friends*. We must, therefore, have an Eye to them; but the other, the Great and Common *Truths*, and *Duties* of the *Gospel*, must be our main Business.



I might add many more *Remarks*, proper to my present Subject, but I know, your own *Prudence* and *Observation* are sufficient to suggest them to you ; I shall only add my *Prayers* for you, that God will encrease your *Wisdom* and *Zeal*, and effectually turn them to his own Glory.

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*To the Dissenting MINISTERS  
of D E R R Y.*

**B**UT as to *You, my Brethren*, that disown my *Communion*, and *Authority*, I have Reason to Fear, that what I shall offer to you, may receive some Prejudices from my *Station* and *Character*, with which you seem offended : Yet *Reason is Reason*, from whomsoever it proceeds ; and, I only desire, that you would weigh seriously what I have here offer'd, in Defence of the *Service of Our Church* ; and if the *Arguments* do not convince *You*, yet let me *pray You* to reflect thus far on the Matter, as to remember,

ber, that all Men's Minds are not of the same Make ; and that it becomes *You*, and all *good Men*, at least, to treat *Our Service* with Respect ; since we believe, and think we have prov'd, That 'tis clearly founded on the *Word of God*. It will not excuse scurrilous, or unseemly Reflections on it, to say that we are mistaken : For all *Men* are fallible, and *You* may as well be mistaken as *You* suppose *We* are ; and therefore, lest *You* should be in the Wrong, it will be the fairest Way to be *modest in Censuring*.

No Man ought to take it ill, that another proposes *Reason* against his *Opinion* ; but to *scoff* at, or *revile* any *Practice* or *Opinion*, that another believes to be founded on the *Word of God*, is not only ill Manners, but is of dangerous Consequence ; being apt to breed *Bitterness* and *Animosities* between the Parties : And if it should happen in a Case, where the *Practice* and *Opinion* is really *Warranted* by the *Word of God*, it would be a *Blasphemy* and *Impiety*. And, therefore, in all  
Matters

Matters of *Religion*, we ought to avoid this Manner of Treatment; and whatever *Book* uses it, we need trouble our selves no further with it, for 'tis certainly written only to serve a Party, and not *Truth*.

There is another Thing, that in *Justice* I think I may request of *You*, which is, That in *Your Worship* and *Practice*, *You* will not make the Difference between us seem greater than really it is. To abstain from a thing confess'd to be Lawful in the *Service of God*, meerly because observ'd by us, surely is very far from a *Spirit of Meekness* and *Moderation*: And, therefore, I may hope, that *You* will not *Indulge the People* in such Affected Distances, that can serve to no other Purpose, but to make Parties irreconcilable; and must proceed from a greater *Bitterness of Spirit*, than a *good Man* can be guilty of towards any Christian.

And that *You* may understand my Mind the better in this Matter, I will give you a few Instances, that, I hope, will

will be inoffensive, and in which, we may justly expect *Your Complaints*.

1. The *first* is, in the Use of the *Lord's Prayer*, which is own'd in *Your Larger Catechism*, to be, *Not only for Direction, as a Pattern according to which we are to make our Prayers, but may be also used as a Prayer*. And in your *Directory*, 'tis recommended to be us'd in the *Prayers of the Church*. Yet I am inform'd, that *You, my Brethren* of this Diocese, who separate from *Our Communion*, do universally neglect it, and thereby confirm *Your Hearers* in an Opinion too common amongst them, that all *Forms of Prayer* are Unlawful: And that, for no other Reason, that I can learn, but to keep up a Difference from us in *Practice*, where we really agree in *Point of Doctrine*.

2. Your *Sitting at Publick Prayers*, may be a Second Instance, in which we may reasonably expect some *Reformation*. 'Tis a very Irreverent Thing in it self, against the *Command* and *Examples of Scriptures*, as I think



I have sufficiently shew'd, and against the *Opinion* of your best *Casuits*, particularly of Dr. *Ames*, *de Conscientia*, Lib. 4. Cap. 18. *Sessio per se non est gestus Orandi, qui nullam exprimit reverentiam, neque in Scripturis approbatur*; that is, "Sitting is not of it self a Posture of Prayer, because it expresses no Reverence, neither is it approv'd in Scripture." Yet I understand, that this is the general Posture in which your *People* offer their Public Prayers; and either because it is for their Ease, or because you are unwilling to lay any Stress on Outward Performances; or, *Lastly*, lest you should be like us, *you* indulge them in it; and some of them are so ignorant, that they reckon it a Piece of Superstition in us to Kneel at our Prayers; and are averse to our Service, amongst other Reasons, because this is requir'd at it. Which Notions, I suppose, you your selves do not approve; and therefore, we may justly expect, that you should endeavour to inform your *People* better, and bring them

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them to a Compliance with the Rules of Decency in their *Religious Performances*.

3. My Third Instance shall be in the Matter of the *Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper* I suppose, no serious considering Persons amongst *you* can deny, but the Celebrating it so seldom as it is done in *your* Meetings, and the *People's* Backwardness in Receiving it, are very great Faults; and, therefore, we may reasonably expect, that you should press home to *your People* the Danger of their Neglect, and represent to them truly the Sin of it, so as not to suffer any to assume the Name of a *Professor*, or a *Religious Person*, that does not in some measure come up to the Scripture-Precedent in this Particular; and withal, so order the Celebration thereof, that every one may have sufficient Opportunities to Receive, as the *first Christians* did; which in your present Way of Managing, is impossible: From whence, *you* may be sure, *yours* is not the *Scripture-way*, and, therefore, needs *Reformation*.

4. Let

4. Let me put *you* in Mind, That 'tis order'd by *your Directory* (as I have already observ'd) that *ordinarily one Chapter of each Testament be read at every Meeting, and sometimes more.* I think *you* cannot dispense with this Rule, without being liable to just Censure, from all that have a true Value for the *Word of God*: And yet I am inform'd, that there is not one of *your Meetings* in this *Diocese* where 'tis observ'd; to the great Detriment of our *Common Christianity*, and Offence of *your Brethren*. I know the *People* are fonder of Sermons and Lectures of Human Composure, than of the pure *Word of God* in its naked Simplicity: But *you* know this to be a carnal, and sinful Humour in them; and God forbids any that claims to be a Minister of the Gospel shou'd indulge them in it: And, therefore, as *you* wou'd maintain a due Reverence in the *People* for the *Word of God*, I think, we may expect your Conformity to us in this Particular.

5. I suppose, *you* very well know, that

that the most Learned and Sober *Non-Conformists* do own, that *Occasional* Communion with our Church is lawful, and that *People* had better come to our *Worship*, (at least where he that *Officiates* is of *Ability* and *Sobriety*) than sit at Home on the *Lord's Day*, or frequent no Assemblies at all; and you cannot be ignorant, that many Thousands in these Parts neglect all *Publick Worship*, and many suffer their Children to dye Unbaptiz'd, for want of Ministers of their *own Communion*; and, therefore, in this Case, 'tis a Point of *Justice* due to the *Souls* of these *poor People*, and to our *Common Christianity*, to let them know, that 'tis their Duty to join with us both in *Worship* and *Sacraments*, as far as your Brethren in *England* have allow'd it on such Occasions.

6. You are sensible, that amongst those *Protestants* that dissent from our Church, some are *Congregational*, and other *Presbyterians*; You of this *Dio-cese* where I am concern'd, profess to be of this latter Sort, and agree with



us in Owning, that by Christ's Appointment, the particular Churches in convenient Districts, ought, according to Scripture-Precedents, to Associate under one Government; and these again to Unite themselves into greater Combinations of *Provincial* and *National* Churches. The Difference between *You* and *Us*, is concerning these particular Districts; namely, Whether the Government of them ought to be in a *Presbytery*, with a *Bishop* as President and Governour, by Christ's Appointment; or in a *College of Presbyters absolutely Equal*. So then, we both own *National* and *Provincial Churches*, as well as single *Worshipping Congregations*; but the *Congregational Dissenters* deny that Christ instituted any other Church, besides a single Congregation, and affirm, that all other Churches, such as *Classical*, *Provincial*, or *National*, are *Human Inventions*; and that every single Congregation is *Independant*, and may, indeed, keep a fair Correspondence with its Neighbour-Congregations, but is  
not

not under any common Government with them. These last are the avowed Principles of Mr. *Baxter*, Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Lobb*, Mr. *Humphrys*, Mr. *Boyse*, Mr. *Alsop*, Mr. *Clarkson*, and generally of all the late Defenders of the *'Dissenters Cause in England and Ireland*, that I have met with. Now 'tis manifest, that these Principles of theirs, are much more *different* from your Principles, than ours are; and the *Difference* is much greater, and more material. For it is possible, on your Principles and ours, to preserve Unity, and to keep up some Value for Excommunication, and other Censures of the Church; since he, who is censur'd in one Church, cannot be receiv'd into another; neither with you, nor us: Whereas in the *Congregational Way*, he that is Excommunicated in one Congregation, may remove to another, or set up one for himself, if he pleases; at the worst, if he shou'd, it wou'd be counted *but an Irregularity*. These Principles are destructive to the Peace and Unity of the Church,

Church, as well as to our *common Cause*: And our Learned Men have carefully Answer'd all the Principal Writers of that Sort; so that no Books of that Kind have remain'd Unanswer'd, but such only as were meer Repetitions of what had been said, and answer'd before. I do not remember any of you have of Late undertaken the Defence of this Important Truth; tho' the *Assembly of Divines*, in their *Humble Advice* — concerning *Church-Government* (which I suppose you approve) do prove it from the Holy Scriptures, in their Title of *Classical Assemblies*. Now we think, in Justice to your Own Cause, as well as to Us, you ought to warn *your People* against those *Books*, that maintain Principles contrary to us both; at least, not to bear them in Hand, that *those Books* written against *Us*, make for *You*; for this will appear a great Piece of Insincerity, as well as Ingratitude; and will tempt the *World* to believe, that you are willing to encourage Principles destructive

structive to *your own Cause*, (as the *Principles* of *those Books* manifestly are in this very *Point*) so they do but *serve a Turn*, and *strengthen* your *Party* amongst the *ignorant People*.

6. *Lastly*, I think we may justly expect from *you* a ready *Concurrence* with us to beat down such *Vices* and *Immoralities*, as are confess'd on all *Hands* to be against our *Common Christianity*; such as *Adultery*, *Fornication*, *Blasphemy*, *Prophanation of the Lord's Day*, &c. And since the *Bishops Courts* are *Legally* impower'd to punish these, and many are guilty of them, who yet will not appear, or submit to acknowledge their *Sins*, and upon that *Account* are *Excommunicated*; the least that can be expected from you in these *Cases*, is, Not to encourage such *Sinners* in their *Obstinacy*, or to admit them to *Communion* amongst *You*, whilst they lye under such *Censures*; which might be a *Means* to *Reform*, in some *Measure*, these *Crying Vices*.

These are but few of those *Things*  
that



that might be instanc'd ; in which we may concur in our *Practice*, as well as we do in our *Opinions* ; and if we did, I persuade my self, that tho' they did not bring us to one *Religious Communion*, yet they might much contribute to our living Easy with one another, and take off that uncharitableness, which our *Religious Dissensions* are apt to cause amongst us : However, it would be a great Satisfaction to Me, and I should reckon it as some kind of Success in my Office, if I could prevail with any sort of *People*, that profess to meet in the Name of *Christ*, to come nearer to his *Institution* in their *Worship*, tho' I should not be able to persuade them to the *Communion*, whereof I am a Member.

To the Conforming LAITY of the  
*Diocese of D E R R Y.*

AS to You, my *Friends* and *Brethren* of the LAITY, who profess your selves Members of the *Establish'd Church* ;

*Church* ; It has pleas'd God to place Me *amongst you* ; and to give me an Inspection *over you* ; and 'tis chiefly on *your Account*, that I have written and publish'd this Treatise, that it may be a Pledge and Testimony to you, of my Concern for you, and make my Care to reach as far as may be amongst you. I hope, my Labours this way may be Useful to you, to settle the Minds of the Doubtful, and to awaken you all to Diligence and Zeal in the Performance of the Service of God.

The great Principles of *your Religion*, as *you* are *Members* of the *Establish'd Church*, are Uncontroverted on all Hands ; and I have here endeavour'd to shew, that your *particular Way of Worship* is warranted by the Holy Scriptures. You have Reason to bless God, that He has afforded you so many Conveniencies of frequenting it ; in which he has been pleas'd to give you so manifest Advantage above your *Dissenting Neighbours*, that notwithstanding their Numerous-

merousness, you have Five Places for Worship, for One that they have. This will render you inexcusable, if you neglect Attendance at them, or spend any *Lord's Day* (as is too common in this Country) in a meer Rest from *Labour*, without any *Publick Worship*.

I must, likewise, put *you* in Mind, That our *Service* is not only fitted for the Publick, but is likewise proper for private Families; and, therefore, I would advise *you* to make Use of the Words with which Our Church has furnish'd you, in *your Houses*, as well as in the Church; at least, to use such select *Hymns* and *Collects* as seem most adapted to that Purpose. And at more Solemn Times, I conceive our *Litany* is as full, and proper a Service, as any Master of a Family can desire to *offer* to God.

I must, therefore, more earnestly, and passionately exhort *you*, by the Name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, for his Church's sake, and *your* own, that *you* will add *Diligence* and *Zeal* to this

*your*

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*To the Conforming Laity of Derry. 241*

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*your reasonable Service, and prepare your Hearts to seek the Lord your God in his Holy Worship: And particularly, that you would endeavour to convince the World, that 'tis not Faction, or a Party you contend for, but the Fruit of Righteousness; and thereupon strive rather to out-live those that differ from you, than to out-argue them. Let the Innocency of your Lives, and your Christian Moderation convince them of the Unreasonableness of their Separation.*

*I beseech the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to multiply his Grace and Peace upon You, and to influence You by his Holy Spirit, that You may be perfect in every Good Work, and particularly in that of Worshipping Him in Purity and Holiness.*



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*To the Dissenting LAITY of the  
Diocese of DERRY.*

**A**S to *You, my Friends*, that Dissent from Our *Communion*, it remains only, that I beseech *you*, in the *Spirit of Meekness*, (as one that is appointed by the Providence of God, and the Care of a Christian Magistracy, to watch over *your Souls*) That *you* will seriously consider, and lay to Heart, what I have here tender'd to *you*. I cannot prevail with *you* to come, and receive *Instruction* from my Mouth, and, therefore, I have taken this Way to inform *you*. I will only add a few *Observations*; which I recommend to *y u*, and shall leave the Success entirely to God.

I. Therefore *you* may observe, That in this *Treatise* I have not led *you* into long *Reasonings*, or the Intricacies of *Human Learning*; but I have refer'd *you* to *your Bibles*, and *you* need go no farther than to them to be satisfy'd, whether the Things I have said be as I have represented them or not. Those of *Berea* are reckon'd a *Noble People* (*Acts xvii. 11.*) because they *search'd the Scriptures*; and I pray most heartily to God, to give *you* a Part in that  
Noble.

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*Nobleness of Mind*, that you may search, and find the *Truth*.

2 I would desire *you* to observe, That it has ever been, and in all probability ever will be the *Humour* of the *World*, to be more fond of *Their Own Invention*, than of what *God Commands*. If we look through the whole *Scriptures*, we shall find, that the *Prophets* sent by *God*, the *Doctrines* reveal'd by Him, and the *Worship* He Commanded, have had but ill Entertainment amongst the *People*. There never appear'd half so much *Zeal*, or *Inclination* in the *Generality* of *Men*, for the *True God* and his *Worship*, as for the false *Gods*, and their *Prophets*. And there is an obvious *Natural Reason* for it; since what *Man* invents, must needs have a nearer Agreement to the *Carnal* and *Corrupt Inclinations* of our depraved *Nature*, than what *God* prescribes; which is the very Reason that induces *Men* to change the *Institution of God*, and substitute their own *Inventions* instead of them. A thing that would never come into any *Man's Mind*, if he did not find more *Ease of Gratification* to his *Humour* to them, than in observing *God's Commandments*.

If it were proper to refer you to the *History* of the *Church*, you would find that most of all the *Corruptions* in the *Worship*



of God, were introduc'd by the Fondness and violent Inclinations of the People for them; and that the Church Governors did long to oppose them, and were brought with Difficulty at last to comply with them. Thus the Worship of *Images*, *Prayers for the Dead*, *Purgatory*, the *intercession of Saints*, *Half-Communion*, being present at *Church-Assemblies* without *Receiving the Lord's Supper*, and *Worshipping the Host*, were all vulgar Practices at first, against the Opinion of the Governours of the Church, who generally Oppos'd and Condemn'd them; but being Human Inventions, the People were so violent for them, that there was no withstanding them; so that if the Governours they had, would not comply, the People did set up those that would.

Now let me entreat you to reflect a little, and consider with all Seriousness, whether there may not be something like this in your own Case, especially in the Matter of *Extemporary Prayers*. 'Tis plain, you have brought them into Practice, against the Opinion and Constitutions of the Church Governours, and of the first Reformers, who did all settle *Liturgies* in the Churches which they Reform'd: This *Knox* did in *Scotland*, whose *Liturgy* we have ready to produce, to the Conviction  
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of those who pretend to be his *Successors*, and yet condemn *Forms of Prayers* as *Unlawful*. This *Luther* did for *Germany*, and *Calven* for *Geneva*, and for the *French Church*, whose *Liturgies* are still us'd by them. Yet I find this weighs not much with you, though you seem to me to have little to oppose to it, besides a strange *Fondness* and *Passion* you have entertain'd for the contrary. And let me tell you, That 'tis no hard Matter to give a Reason, why the Generality of the People are better pleas'd with such *Extemporary Prayers*, than with *Forms*: For can any one wonder, that a Prayer which People never heard of before, and is adapted to the *Fancies* and *Humours* of a *Party*, with all the Advantages which *Novelty* gives, should gratify carnal and itching Ears, more than the fix'd and settl'd Prayers of a Church, or that *Form* dictated by *Christ* himself? To join in these with *Devotion*, requires us duly to prepare our Hearts, to strain and lift up our Minds with much Seriousness and Attention, or we cannot be affected by them; whereas there is a Pleasure, and a Kind of Sensual Delight in the Novelty of the other *Prayers*; and the Tone with which they are sometimes deliver'd, makes the Hearers imaginarily Devout, tho' they come to them without taking

taking Pains to strain their Minds to true *Devotion*. But you ought to remember, that *Images*, and *Reliques*, and *Mediatory Saints* had the very same Effect on People long ago; which made them so fond of them, that they brought them into their *Worship*, in 'spite of the *Bish. ps* and *Pastors* of the Church, as you have now brought in *Extemporary Prayers*: But 'tis rare to find the Generality of Men fond of what is truly Spiritual: And, therefore, Peoples Fondness of your peculiar Way of *Worship*, is so far from being an Argument for it, as I find some of you use it, that, on the contrary, 'tis a shrew'd Presumption that it is not from *God*; especially since ill People are fond of it, as well as good; as is manifest from many undeniable Instances; which could not be so, if it were truly, and of it self Spiritual.

3 I would desire you to consider, That nothing can generally induce *Our Clergy*, to decline these *Extemporary Prayers*, but their *Conscience* and *Conviction* that they are not convenient in the Publick Service of *God*. 'Tis manifest, that *Extemporary Prayers* would be much more easie to most of us, and less burthensome than the Service we use: *You* may think otherwise, but assure your selves that you are mistaken; and I dare appeal to those that have try'd  
both,

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*To the Dissenting Laity of Derry. 247*

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*both*, whether is most easie. There are such both amongst *You* and *Us*, who have made the Experiment; and I dare refer it to them to declare, or ther *Consciences*, which of the *two Services* they look on to be he greater Burthen to him that performs them. Whatever *You* may think, if we would *indulge* our selves, it were no hard Matter for the meanest of *Us* to pass an *Extemporary Prayer* on our *Auditory*, or to turn the Heads of our Sermons into one.

*Lastly*, I have one Thing which I would more-especially request of *You*, that *You* would believe that I sincerely and heartily desire, and study the Good of *your Souls*; and that I have, in this *Treatise*, endeavour'd to promote it, and by *God's Assistance* ever shall in all my *Undertakings*.

And if *You* had the same Apprehensions with *Me*, *You* would not wonder at my Concern in this Matter; for how is it possible, that any Man that has a Zeal for the Purity of *God's Worship*, should not have his Spirit mov'd within him, to have a Well-meaning People so strangely misled, as to content themselves to meet together perhaps for some Years, with a Design to *Worship God*, and yet hardly ever see, or hear any thing of *God's immediate Appointment in their Meeting*. Now, to my Thoughts, this is manifestly the Case of many of *You*; since



since a Man may frequent some *Meetings* amongst *You* for some Years, and never hear a *Prayer*, a *Psalms*, a *Chapter*, which has been immediately dictated by God, and never be call'd on to bow his Knee to God, or see either *Minister* or *People* address themselves to Him in that humble Posture. *Lastly*, Never see any Body offer to Administer, or desire to Receive the *Food of Life* in the *Lord's-Supper*. These are Melancholy Reflections to me, who believe, that God has requir'd these in His *Worship*; and therefore, I hope, *You* will take it in good Part, that I endeavour to restore them to *You*.

I have only to add my most Earnest Prayers to God for *You*: And to beseech Him, who is the God of Mercy, and Purchaser of his Church, by a Price Inestimable, to vouchsafe his Blessing to these my Endeavours, for *your Soul's Instruction*; That *You* may reap the Benefit, and I the Comfort of them, in the Great Day of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who only is the True Teacher of Souls by his Spirit, and is able to Seal the *Instructions* of his Minister to *Your Hearts*, to open the Eyes of *Your Understandings*, and to guide *You* into all Truth.

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